

## PHD

**Love at work: What is my lived experience of love, and how may I become an instrument of love's purpose?**

Lohr, Eleanor

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**LOVE AT WORK: WHAT IS MY LIVED EXPERIENCE OF  
LOVE, AND HOW MAY I BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF  
LOVE'S PURPOSE?**

Eleanor Lohr

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

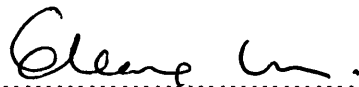
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School of Management

February 2006

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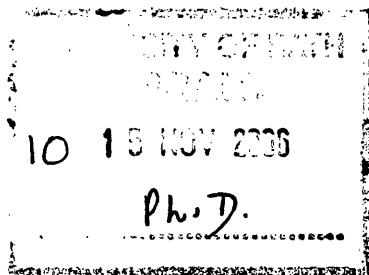
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**LOVE AT WORK: WHAT IS MY LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LOVE, AND HOW  
MAY I BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF LOVE'S PURPOSE?**

**Abstract of PhD Submission to the University of Bath 2006**

**Eleanor Lohr**

This is a first person action research account in which I immerse myself in my embodied experience of love. My aim is to learn through love how my practice, as a Director in social housing, and as a teacher of yoga, might be improved by giving primacy to a value laden theorising of my lived experience.

I combine journalling and spiritual practice to bring an intimate and non-verbal experience of love into professional practice. I bring this inner felt experience into language taking a phenomenological and hermeneutical approach. I immerse myself in the relation between physical, emotional and spiritual knowledge. I analyse the movement of knowledge between the personal and the social in the language of inclusionality (Rayner 2004), and show how social relations mediate my inner non-verbal experience.

I situate my method within the action research paradigm and my philosophy within a holistic and subjectivist frame. As I write I realise my knowledge in the relation between thinking and the act of writing. My knowledge and its production are deliberately value-laden. I cultivate reasoned emotion in order to influence my thought process. My claim to originality of mind emerges from this subjective experience as I show how I bring my ontological values of love into practice through a 'pedagogy of presence' that is integral to my action.

I judge the worth of my action and its loving dimension in silent reflective spiritual practice. I also judge the worth of my action and its loving dimension in the feedback I get from others. I set criteria that focus on seeking harmony and wholeness, and which do not ignore challenge and difference. I argue that the creative dynamism arising from difference is an important component of love at work.

I provide evidence for my claim in an account of current practice, through pictures, drawings and a video clip, and it is further evidenced by the coherence of my writing and the rigorous application of my own criteria against which I judge the worth of my actions. My claim to truth can also be substantiated by my application of method, and by situating my inquiry firmly within a post-modern narrative.

## **CONTENTS**

Prologue	page x
Introduction	page 1
<b>PART ONE: THEORY</b>	
CHAPTER ONE: Meanings of love	page 10
The transformational nature of love	page 12
Clarifying the meanings of love	page 15
The transmission of love	page 23
CHAPTER TWO: Propositional Framing	page 27
Feminist Theories	page 28
Modern and post modern philosophy	page 39
The ordering principles of language	page 51
Example of Reflective Writing	page 51
Religious constructions of self	page 55
Ontology and the structures of being	page 59
Inclusional space and the Complex Self	page 65
Bernstein's theories of pedagogy	page 70
CHAPTER THREE: Action Research Models and Method	page 76
How is this Inquiry and how is this action research?	page 76
Extended epistemology and claims to truth	page 79
Action research models and spiritual practices	page 81
Engagement with others	page 83
The dialogic relation	page 85
Case Example One	page 87
Developing living theory	page 95
Peer review processes	page 97

Applying action research models	page 99
 CHAPTER FOUR: Inclusional Methodology	 page 100
Action Account	page 100
First Iteration	page 105
Developing a sense of the aesthetic	
Second Iteration	page 109
My inclusional methodology	
Third Iteration	page 112
The inclusional space and ordering principles	
Summary	page 116

## **PART TWO: EXPERIENCE**

 CHAPTER FIVE: Experiencing love	 page 117
Stories	page 117
The experiential meaning of love	page 127
Reflective writing	page 131
Language	page 146
Growth through love	page 153
Loving practices	page 166
 CHAPTER SIX: Embodied Knowing	 page 170
Action account	
Practising and learning yoga	page 170
First iteration	
Contemplating the links between body and mind	page 172
Second iteration	
The relation of yoga to (e)pistemology	page 177

Third iteration	
At the boundaries of the inner and outer world	page 180
Case Example Two	page 182
Evaluating the teaching of embodied knowledge	page 187
Summary	page 189

### **PART THREE: PRACTICE**

CHAPTER SEVEN: Eros and Organisation	page 190
Action account	page 190
Leadership Practice in WHHA	
First iteration	page 195
The embodied resonances of eros	
Moving towards wholeness:	
Idealism and vision in organisation	page 196
Eros and vision in WHHA	page 198
Desire and contradiction	page 201
Case Example Three	page 203
Second iteration	
On models of leadership	page 208
The skills of leadership	page 212
Torbert's model of leadership development	page 217
Third iteration	
On pleasure	page 223
Summary	page 224

CHAPTER EIGHT: Agape and Organisation	page 226
Action Account:	
A critical incident and the dynamic of contradiction	page 226
First iteration:	
Embodied resonances	page 233
Second iteration:	
Emotional landscapes of interaction	page 235
Emotional authenticity in conversation	page 237
Case Example Four	page 241

Third Iteration:

The emergence of organisational form	page 243
How do I know that this is a good thing to do?	page 245
Systems and structure in organisation	page 247

Fourth Iteration:

Connecting the emotional landscapes of interaction with spiritual practice	page 250
Summary	page 255

CHAPTER NINE: A Pedagogy of Presence page 257

Letting love show me the way	page 257
Pedagogy	page 260
The recontextualising field	page 260
How do I know that tacit pedagogy is ethically sound?	page 262
Pedagogy of presence	page 263
My embodied living educational theory	page 265

CHAPTER TEN: Divine Love in Organisation page 266

Action Account:

Witnessing	page 267
------------	----------

First Iteration:

Reflections on silence	page 268
Case Example Five	page 268

Second Iteration:

The discourse of presence in organisation	page 272
Summary	page 274

**PART FOUR: FINDINGS**

**CHAPTER ELEVEN: Evaluating Practice** **page 275**

Summarising my findings	page 275
Case Example Six	page 276
Evaluating practice against my standards of judgement	page 283
Evaluating 'a pedagogy of presence'	page 286
Evaluating the noumenal qualities of love at work	page 286
The truth of the method	page 290
Evaluating this thesis against my standards	page 291

**CHAPTER TWELVE: Relational Epistemology  
and the Academic Audience** **page 293**

Relational epistemology and the audience	
The action research audience	page 293
The wider academic audience	page 304
The audience beyond academia	page 309

**Epilogue** **page 310**

The examiners' challenges	page 310
Experience, theory and practice	page 312
Critical subjectivity	page 316
Evaluating my learning rewriting the thesis	page 317

**Bibliography** **page 319**

## **PICTURES**

Eros at the heart of action	page 16
The dynamic of contradiction	page 17
Mapping a critical incident	page 18
The practices of love	page 19
Practising headstand	page 20
CD-ROM attached pocket	page 328

## **EXAMPLES OF REFLECTIVE WRITING**

Love's Logic	page 57
Touching the piano	page 131
Losing stamina	page 314

## **CASE EXAMPLES OF RELATIONAL PRACTICE**

Case Example One	
Working with Contradiction in an Inquiry Group	page 87
Case Example Two:	
Transmitting Embodied Knowledge	page 182
Feedback from Students	page 186-7
Case Example Three	
The Risk Appraisal Panel	page 203
Case Example Four	
The Breakfasts	page 241
Case Example Five	
Silent Practice Influencing Action	page 268
Case Example Six	
Chairing the Board at NHH	page 276



**LOVE AT WORK: WHAT IS MY LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LOVE, AND HOW MAY I  
BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF LOVE'S PURPOSE?**

**PROLOGUE**

This is a revised PhD submission.

In the original draft I showed how I inquired by holding the memory of divine love in my mind; I was 'in love' as I wrote. I described this process as 'holding the "other" as part of the self'. An action research methodology and a first person inquiry practice, combined with daily spiritual practice, enabled me to bring the qualities of 'being' more fully into my professional practice. As I wrote the thesis I began to appreciate the nature of my scholarship, and to articulate the form of my 'living educational theory' (Whitehead, 1988). Getting to know what I already know, and learning more about how I learn, enabled me to improve what I do.

Writing this second submission I continue to hold the 'other' as part of the self. My decisions about how to re-present the material and my findings, were made whilst holding two embodied memories of the viva in my mind. The first memory is of one examiner's gentle curiosity about the connections between the eight limbs of yoga and action research, and the second memory is of the other examiner's politeness as he said he was trying not to be rude. It is the memory of gentle curiosity that gets me excited about the prospect of turning my thesis upside down and inside out, and it is the latter memory that finally led me to the decision to dismember the earlier thesis.

Some of the original thesis remains. I continue to rely on my experience of love. This is at the heart of my inquiry. In the first draft, when writing about my experience and when reflecting on accounts of my practice I kept to my intention to go deep into the roots of my being, and remained constant in my belief that knowledge would emerge that would alter my professional practice. I did this by writing whilst 'holding the

shape and purpose of my inquiry' in my mind, and asking the question, 'How may I become an instrument of love's purpose?' I wrote and reflected on the gaps between my knowledge of what love is, and my knowledge of my practice, and let this sensed memory of love flow through the feelings of not knowing. By reflecting in this way, I began to understand the quality of the loving knowledge that I wanted to bring into my actions.

At the end of my original inquiry I had set criteria against which others might judge my text and my practice. I anticipate that being judged by these criteria will help me to improve my capacity to live the values of love in all aspects of my life.

The first of these criteria is **my capacity to reframe or recontextualise what I am, or we are doing now**. It is this standard that I have applied as I made decisions about how to rewrite and restructure the thesis.

My claim is that I may become an instrument of love through a pedagogy of presence. My findings are arrived at through a process of clarifying the meaning of the values of love. My findings are deliberately value-laden. My intention is to bring love into practice, for my action in the world to be useful, to become an instrument of love. This is why I combine action research methodologies with my spiritual practice. This thesis shows how I have developed my living educational theory from a combination of theory, established action research methods and spiritual practice.

In action research, spiritual dimensions can be researched and incorporated in many different ways. It is possible to validate individual spiritual experience of the subtle realms through co-operative inquiry (Heron 1998), but I am not seeking to validate my subtle experience. What I want to show is how I bring the spiritual qualities of love into my practice by becoming an instrument of love's purpose.

This is first person inquiry, situated within a clearly specified cultural context, inspired by and reaching out to, a sensed memory of the divine. My learning has developed through a reading of theory, experience and practice which is uniquely mine.

In the first draft I relied on Patti Lather's 'Fertile Obsession' (Lather 1993), substantiating my learning through a proliferation of evidence (my stories, drawings, photographs and video) which showed the emergence of my meaning making processes. Here now, one step away from the messiness, the noumenal, rhizomatic quality of divine love, another step away from the poetic, confessional, voluptuous excess; the power of my personally-held truth is not demonstrated in quite the same way. Now, I am writing more as an observer, a spectator.

In writing the first submission, I paid no attention to academic convention, just took convention for granted. In so doing, I wrote (without realising) a thesis that stretched existing conventions; producing a text that was more 'writerly' than 'readerly'. My examiners told me that the connections between theory, evidence and conclusion were not made sufficiently explicit. So this rewrite has been focussed on making these connections clearer.

### **THE EXAMINERS' JUDGEMENT**

This thesis explores love at work from a phenomenological and hermeneutic perspective, drawing on subjective experience of loving practice. Its disciplined sources include daily practice of meditation, observation and journaling of practice, feedback from others, in the context of an action research process in personal and organisational contexts. The inquiry is embedded in a theoretical discourse which

draws on both Western and Eastern worldviews and philosophies as well as contemporary social psychology theory.

As examiners we found the thesis difficult to comprehend, partly because it attempts to offer a non-linear form of exploration, and partly because links between theory, evidence, and conclusion were not clearly drawn. We addressed four major questions in the viva:

- 1) How this is work inquiry, and in particular how is it action research? We had a strong sense of the candidate's own questions, but were unclear as to how she saw herself as engaging with others in this, and speaking to a wider audience in academia and beyond.
- 2) Related to this we were concerned about the absence of a strong methodological discussion. There was little of the articulation of models of action research which we might expect, and consideration of how the work develops through these.
- 3) The two primarily theoretical chapters covered a very wide range of ideas and literature, but the flow of argument was often unclear.
- 4) The primary chapter containing evidence of inquiry practice was disjointed and disconnected from theoretical themes

In the viva the candidate gave a strong defence of both form and content of the thesis, arguing for the rationale of the approach and form of the thesis. As a result of the viva discussions, we were convinced that many of the problems of the thesis are

presentational, and that there is a strong and original underlying line of inquiry which if better articulated would be of value to other scholars and practitioners.

We have therefore asked the candidate to undertake major revisions, and as part of the viva had an extended discussion of what these would involve. They include

- 1) Clarifying the structure of the thesis, how the different chapters and sections are inter-related. This does not mean that the candidate has to adopt a completely linear form, but that the patterns of the thesis must be made clear to the reader.
- 2) That the process of inquiry must be made explicit, such that cycles of action and reflection are articulated and that strong links be made between experience, practice, and theory.
- 3) That the candidate ensure that the evidence provided supports the conclusions reached.

Given the seriousness of the revisions required, a further viva examination is required.

I have approached the task set by my examiners by following the form of the question, 'How do I improve my thesis?' (Whitehead 2004b) and taking careful note of their requirements.

**i) I experience concerns arising from the viva:**

The examiners say:

- How is this work inquiry, and in particular how is it action research?
- the absence of a strong methodological discussion
- the flow of argument was often unclear
- the primary chapter ...was disjointed and disconnected from theoretical themes
- the patterns of the thesis must be made clear to the reader.
- the process of inquiry must be made explicit, such that cycles of action and reflection are articulated and that strong links be made between experience, practice, and theory.
- the evidence provided supports the conclusions reached.

I ask myself, 'How am I going to rewrite this thesis, does it have to be in a report format to satisfy them?'

**ii) I imagine the solution:**

I reread the notes that I made to respond to the questions posed in the viva and begin to imagine how I might work this into the re-presentation of my writing. I want to add more explanation to the original. I imagine putting the original into an appendix, and doing the rewrite as Volume One.

I look at the examiner's report; I am resistant to a full revision but nevertheless realise that I cannot do a rewrite with the original intact.

I decide to frame the 'experiential' writing with chapters explicitly focussed on theory, action research methods and models, and place the hermeneutical writing later.

**(iii) I act in the direction of this solution:**

I plan a linear structure. I am thinking in report-writing mode. To ensure that the focus of the writing is clear to the reader, I decide to write about what I am going to write, write it, and write it again. This should address issues concerned not only with structure but also with the flow of 'argument'.

**(iv) I evaluate the outcome of my actions:**

As I write I create firmer boundaries between lived experience and lived practice, and decide to restructure the thesis again, differentiating between 'Lived Experience' and 'Professional Practice'.

Then I structure the 'lived experience' and 'practice' chapters, highlighting the iterative processes of action and reflection, but retaining the chapter that I originally wrote first (referred to by my examiners as 'the primary chapter') because it is the ground of my knowing from which my inquiry emerged.

As I write I present the evidence to support my claims. I decide to introduce feedback from my yoga students, and to explore other ways in which my developing understanding of 'love at work' in organisations might be presented.

**(v) I modify my actions in the light of evaluations:**

As I rewrite, I am evaluating the meaning that this re-vision has had for my understanding of love at work. I decide to not to refer to this evaluation process in the body of the thesis, and decide to evaluate my learning and its relevance to my ongoing inquiry in the Epilogue.

I formulate the structure of the resubmission and begin the rewrite.



## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is in four parts.

The chapters in Part One set out the theories and models that frame my inquiry.

Part Two contains phenomenological and hermeneutical accounts of my lived embodied experience.

Part Three addresses the issue of love in organisation and is in the form of a series of iterative reflections on my leadership practice. From this I develop praxis<sup>1</sup>, my living educational theory of a pedagogy of presence.

I present my findings in Part Four where an account of current practice is judged against criteria developed in Part One. In the final Chapter, I consider the contribution that my inquiry makes to the academic audience.

### PART ONE: THEORY

Part One is concerned with ideas, models and my methodology. I use theory as a mental frame, not a two-dimensional picture frame to be seen from outside, but a three-dimensional doorframe, through which I pass.

I write knowing that my words and language are culturally determined, that even my sentence construction supports and defines my way of seeing and explaining the world. In Part One I first declare the grounding from which my language springs, and secondly provide the reader with a reference to the ideas which explain and justify my inquiry perspective.

Initially these ideas and models enable me to connect with what I know already and enable me to acknowledge the cultural roots and the values embedded in my thinking. How I come to put words to what I know is described in Part Two. New concepts and ideas then inform me as my inquiry develops, and I document this

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<sup>1</sup> Definition taken from Park, 'The notion of praxis...gives action or practice the primary role in the relation between action and theory, such that theory is thought of as experienced based.' (Park, 2001 p. 87)

process in Part Three. Then in Part Four I pause the theory frame and look back on how my embodied knowledge has been changed, recontextualised and reframed by these new ideas and new models.

So Part One describes these theories, separating them out from the lived experience and the lived practice of my inquiring so that the connections between theory, experience and practice can be made clearer.

I begin in Chapter One by defining what I mean by love. These meanings were developed over the course of the inquiry, and have been distilled and represented in order to clarify my definitions for the reader from the outset. Drawings, a photograph and a CD-ROM provide supplementary illustrations of these meanings of love.

In Chapter Two I write about the ideas of others and illustrate what I mean using examples and illustrations. These ideas informed my inquiry and coloured my thinking.

In an example of reflective writing I demonstrate how I write holding the sensed memory of love in my mind, which is then expressed through these philosophical frames.

I show how I understand the socially constructed nature of language, and maintain that my reflexive use of language enables me to develop propositional knowledge by glimpsing and reflecting on the meanings underlying my choice of words and my use of language.

I go on to suggest ways in which religious cultures influence the construction of the self and explain the theories of pedagogy (Bernstein, 2000) and inclusionality (Rayner, 2004) that significantly influenced my inquiry. Finally, I defend my decision to inquire from a value-laden perspective and make the links between developing propositional knowledge and the development of my unique living educational theory of a pedagogy of presence.

In Chapter Three I take the action research models of Reason (Reason and Bradbury, 2001), Heron (Heron, 1996), Marshall (Marshall, 2005) and Whitehead (Whitehead, 1988) from which I have developed my inquiry methodology. I show

how I use the dialogic relation between incongruent life experiences and the dissonances of embodied knowing. I apply Whitehead's question, 'How do I improve the expression of loving values through my actions?' and give a case example that demonstrates my dialectical approach. The example shows the relational mode of my inquiring, and also shows how I develop propositional knowledge from practical knowledge in the extended epistemology of Heron (ibid. p. 57).

I start Chapter Four with a journalled account of action and show how my methodology is disclosed in cycles of action and reflection as described in the previous chapter. In the process of applying the 'ordering principles of language' I show how my methodology surfaces contradiction, and how I judge the 'truth' of my method by testing the congruence of my methodology against accounts of my leadership practice. I maintain that the silence experienced in spiritual practice reorders my thought. I go on to develop three criteria against which this inquiry and my practice can be judged. These criteria are surfaced from a reflective process that combines the ordering principle of silence and the ordering principles of language.

## **PART TWO: LIVED EXPERIENCE**

In Part Two my inquiry begins by following the logic of my sensed experience. Both chapters in Part Two describe how I make sense of living in the world as I think through the relation of language, feeling and embodied knowing.

In Chapter Five I hold the embodied memory of love in my mind as I put my experience of love into language. I do this by referring to the ideas of others as they influence my feeling and thinking process. As I follow through on this process, some of the 'theory' contained in Part One is repeated as I begin to identify three aspects of love: eros, agape and divine love. This chapter develops its own logic, and does not have an 'argument'.

Chapter Six highlights the dynamic relation of my mind and body as I learn through experience of the phenomenon (letting it speak to me) rather than by

analysing the phenomenon (deciding how the phenomenon should be categorised or quantified) (Bortroft 1996)<sup>2</sup>.

In this Chapter, I show how I use the ordering principles of language and silence to surface meanings and make them socially relevant. I illustrate this with a case example, which provides evidence of the connection between my learning and teaching yoga. This demonstrates how my propositional knowledge influences my practical knowledge, which is 'knowing the truth in the action' (Heron, 1996, p. 57).

### **PART THREE: PRACTICE**

In Part Two, Chapter Five, I discriminate between eros, agape and divine love. Now in Part Three these three aspects of love are brought into a new relation with my leadership practice.

As I continue to write and reason through feeling, theory is reframed and re-contextualised as my understanding alters and my inquiry progresses. Starting with living systemic thinking (Marshall, 2004), I develop my understanding of love using the dynamics of Inclusionality (Rayner, 2004) where meaning and context interact<sup>3</sup> and co-create.

Each chapter is structured to show the iterative relation of action and reflection. I draw on accounts of my leadership practice and reflect on the gaps between practical knowing and experiential knowing.

Chapter Seven develops these themes by considering an account of my leadership practice through the lens of eros. I critique Torbert's Leadership Development Framework (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert, 2000). There is no argument; instead there are iterative reflections on the effect of erotic extremes in a practical organisational context. At the end of this unstructured free flowing process I have clarified the meaning of eros in an organisational context,

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<sup>2</sup> Bortroft's theories are discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>3</sup> See Rayner (2004). Rayner's theories of inclusionality are covered more fully in Chapter Two.

critiqued a skills based approach to leadership development, and begun to appreciate the learning that arises from my inquiry process.

Chapter Eight follows the same action and reflection format used in the previous chapter. I take the perspective of agape and consider the potential for organisational structures to be derived from relation rather than hierarchy. I do this by referring to Complexity Theory and self-organising systems (Griffin, 2002), (Shaw, 2002), and by reflecting on my experience of conversation in an organisational context, in an inquiry group and amongst friends. By the end of this chapter I have realised how I combine action research practice with spiritual practice, and become clearer about my decision making processes.

I deliberately collapse the distinction between the private 'self' and the public 'other' in these two chapters. By doing this I develop praxis, my living educational theory, which crystallises in Chapter Nine. Here I show how standing on the edge of the unknown is part of my learning process as I reflexively inquire into the meanings underlying action. I draw together the knowledge gained from the previous two chapters, and bring this into alignment with Bernstein's theories of pedagogic communication<sup>4</sup>. In this chapter I develop my theory of how love can be transmitted through embodiment in a pedagogy of presence. By the end of this chapter I know how it is possible for me to become an instrument of love's purpose, and how I can influence the meanings of love through the inclusional flow.

In Chapter Ten I reflect further on the inclusional<sup>5</sup> dimensions of eros and agape and the social construction of relationship. I establish the relevance of 'nonmaterial regions of influence' (Jaworski, 1998) and spiritual practice in an organisational context. I refer to Scharmer's theory of 'presencing the future' (Scharmer, 2000) and use his inspirational example of how presence can influence organisational practice (Senge and Scharmer, 2001).

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<sup>4</sup> Bernstein's theory is also discussed in Chapter Two

<sup>5</sup> Theories of Inclusionality are covered in Chapter Two.

## **PART FOUR: FINDINGS**

The two Chapters in Part Four draw conclusions and substantiate the links between theory and practice.

In Chapter Eleven I summarise my findings. In a further account of current practice, evidence is provided to support my claim that love can be brought into my professional practice through a pedagogy of presence. I apply the criteria set out in Chapter Four and evaluate my practice using these standards.

Finally, in Chapter Twelve I demonstrate the relevance of my inquiry to the academic audience and beyond. I consider four action research accounts and papers (Reason, 2000), (Winter, 2003), (Heron, 1996) and (Torbert, 2001), and four academic perspectives (Cho, 2005), (Griffin, 2002), (Fraser, 2003) and (Biberman and Whitty, 2000) and assess the contribution of this inquiry to those discussions.

## **EPILOGUE**

Finally, I give an account of the learning derived from the process of re-presenting my inquiry and the re-submission of this thesis, and then evaluate my inquiry taking into account both the examiners' requirements and my first standard of judgement set out in Chapter Four.

## **STRUCTURE AND PROCESS**

The presentation of this thesis in a four-part structure does not reflect the messy reality of my lived inquiry and writing up processes. It was messy because the form of my inquiry was emergent at every stage and in every way.

The reality is that I started inquiring by plunging into descriptions of the felt experience of love and writing Chapter Five, then Seven, then Eight and then Ten, not knowing whether this journaling could be either practical or relevant. For these chapters I journalled pages and pages of felt responses to events and then interwove these feelings with further thoughts provoked by my reading;

incorporating and referring to ideas that I felt either drawn to or with which I disagreed.

I explain my methodology in Chapter Four. I had generated a lot of data in my reflective writing, and much of this writing did not seem very relevant to my project, but my aim was to be an instrument of love's purpose, not to be instrumental. This meant not constructing an argument, but allowing themes to arise from within the 'data set'.

However, in the later stages I began to realise that I had been using my data in particular ways and that there were underlying principles shaping my inquiry, principles that I could point to and that I could use as 'tools'. This is how I came to denote the ordering principles of language, and the ordering principle of silence, at the end of Chapter Four.

These ordering principles became very useful as I began to consider how to present my findings to the reader. As I wrote up my inquiry I realised that I needed to summarise the data generated in Chapters Seven and Eight. I then summarised further, taking my findings into a separate chapter, Chapter Nine, which clarified the nature of the tacit pedagogic transmission I was writing about. Putting these summaries at the front end of the data might have made my 'arguments' clearer, but I had determined to find love's purpose from within process, and so I ask the reader's forbearance in this matter. I am presenting a 'truer' picture of my process by drawing findings from data rather than justifying already stated conclusions.

Considering how to present my thesis from the reader's perspective also highlighted two further aspects of this inquiry. Not only is my reflective learning style weighted towards the absorption and realisation of knowledge, where knowledge arises from within and so is not easily located in a particular context, but it is also holistic in the sense that it is derived more intuitively than analytically.

I address this in Chapter Two when I begin by showing that I am sensible of cultural frame within which I act and from which my knowledge is produced. But then, in the middle of this Chapter, I move away from privileging a predominantly analytic mode of knowledge production to privileging a more disclosing and

holistic mode of knowledge production. And I make a similar distinction between the analysis of action research models in Chapter Three and the disclosure of my methodology presented in Chapter Four.

The implication of this holistic approach means that my 'realised' knowledge appears as if from nowhere. It means that when I write about what I know it can be received by the reader as an 'assertion' rather than as a thought that arises from embodied and embedded knowledge resulting from lived experience and lived practice and made in a relational response to the people and events around me.

Chapter Six shows how these 'assertions' arise. One of my purposes in writing this Chapter was to demonstrate how my speech, my teaching and my decisions are made in an embodied, grounded and relational way.

Finally, in Chapter Eleven I provide evidence to substantiate my findings. Both Chapters Eleven and Twelve were written with the reader held firmly in my mind, I spoke to the reader, 'held the reader as a part of myself', as I analysed, interpreted and evaluated my findings. These chapters, together with the Prologue, were written in the order in which they are presented to the reader.

## **DATA, FINDINGS AND EVIDENCE**

My aim was to explore how I might become an instrument of love. In order to do this I immersed myself in a sensed memory of love. (I write about love in more detail in Chapter One) The thoughts that arose as I held this inward sense of love as a part of myself and then focussed my outward gaze on accounts of my actions in the world gave rise to 'reflective writing'. (I write about methodology in Chapters Three and Four). This reflective writing generated a huge amount of data. The writing was loosely formed, not guided by anticipated outcomes, not deliberately structured. However, it was this method that enabled me to look beneath my actions and surface the meanings of love that underlay my actions in the world. And one of the consequences of the process is that there is 'unused' data, data that appears to have nothing to do with the findings but data which is nevertheless integral to my inquiry process.



At the end of each reflective cycle I summarise my findings still guided by the embodied memory of love, but now asking the question, 'What does this data tell me about becoming an instrument of love?' And the summaries are my responses to this question. Chapter Nine is the final summary of this process in which I justify my understanding of a pedagogy of presence.

Finally, in Chapter Eleven, I provide an action account as evidence of the way that I bring love into my action, validate the underlying presence of love, and evaluate my research process with reference to action research models.

## PART ONE: THEORY

### CHAPTER ONE

#### MEANINGS OF LOVE

*In this Chapter I explain my use of Ruddick's 'reflective assessment of feeling' (Ruddick 1989) as an exemplar. Then I go on to summarise my meanings of love as these were clarified over the course of my inquiry. I illustrate my findings with drawings, a photograph and a CD-ROM.*

#### MY INQUIRING APPROACH

My aim was to bring my experience of love into the social world in a practical way. I chose an action research frame for my inquiry for this reason, because it is explicit in its focus on practical knowledge, and on improving practice. I also chose to put love at the forefront, and at the centre of my inquiry. I decided to let love influence my sensemaking because I wanted love to actively influence the way that I work with others. My initial question was 'How can I be guided by love in my inquiry?'

Action researchers recognise the importance and relevance of both values and subjectivity, but I could not find an action research exemplar on which to model my inquiry. Putting love at the centre of my research practice, I had already begun writing subjective accounts of my experience of love based on my journals. The excerpt below will give the reader an example of how I was writing, putting words to embodied sensation.

'From a young age, if I had the idea that something was not 'right' that feeling of 'not rightness' came from my body. If the words 'I love you' or 'I am very angry' were said, I would decide what that meant and whether or not the statement was 'true' from the way I felt physically on hearing them. Then I would make a distinction between what I understood to be the intended meaning of utterance and my feeling response in order to decide the truth of the statement. It was a way of experiential knowing that identified meaning by aligning the words with

bodily responses and it enabled me to make meaning out of confusion' (See Chapter Five, p. 128).

In the course of writing Chapter Five I sought justification for my approach in eastern Buddhist philosophy (Verala, Thompson and Roche, 1991), in feminist constructs of gendered identities (Weedon, 1987) and in the philosophy of Spinoza (Damasio, 2003). I was particularly drawn to the philosophy of Spinoza because he advocated the deliberate cultivation of joyfulness. This was important because I had been deliberately cultivating my sensed memories of love, and allowing my writing to be influenced as fully as possible by the sensations of love.

However, these ideas were more intellectual than practical, and I wanted to ground my inquiry in my everyday life. Then, as I was browsing in a bookshop, the title 'Maternal Thinking' (Ruddick, 1989) caught my eye.

## THE TRANSFORMATIONAL NATURE OF LOVE

### Thinking and acting through love

Ruddick (1989) defines loving activity in various ways. She writes of love as connecting thought with feeling which then leads into action. Whilst recognising that there are many ways of thinking that are not imbued with emotional components, she considers that in protecting and nurturing their children mothers think like this:

'Feelings cry out for thought; hence reflective assessment of feeling is a defining relational activity of mothers' (Ruddick, 1989 p. 70)

She demonstrates how the qualities of love underpin and influence mothering activity. She makes it clear that not all mothers act lovingly all the time, that some mothers are unable to care for their children in this way, and that the term 'mother' refers to adults who look after children in a mothering capacity, but who are not inevitably the biological mother or necessarily female.

She defines preservative love as seeking to work with the child's personality, with the way the child sees the world. It is a way of thinking through feeling, which is focussed on giving the child what it needs in terms of education, training and security. Thinking through feeling then develops in the process of carrying out, and then reflecting on, her mothering acts.

Ruddick says:

'To foster growth is to nurture a child's developing spirit.' (Ruddick, 1989 p. 82)

Fostering growth means creating the context in which the child can grow and learn, and which necessitates a 'welcoming response to change' (ibid. p. 89). Ruddick's writing showed me how love between mother and child enabled the child to develop. I began to see how, by the cultivation of loving feeling, I could use this transformational energy to guide the direction of my inquiry.

Ruddick demonstrate through examples, how the mother encourages the uneven, inevitable and unpredictable growth of the child through her actions and her stories. Her role is to understand the child's needs, and to provide comfort and explanation. It is to ensure the child's safety as well as provide opportunities for experimentation, to give support without being too close, to encourage individuality and teach the child how to share. In order to do this the mother must appreciate both the unique viewpoint and capacity of the child.

Similarly in her study of the way women work in organisations Fletcher (Fletcher 1999) suggests that women show a tendency to care for work projects in a similar way to caring for children. She coins the phrase 'relational practice' to describe a range of skills and activities that are used in a work settings, which are often unnoticed, and which create connections between individual and teams that are necessary to achieve project goals.

What differentiates preserving behaviour from other categories of relational practice is the focus on task and the relational representation of this focus as one of protection, nurturing and connecting. In this way, preserving activities are similar to what Sara Ruddick calls "preservative love" one of the three practices underlying maternal thinking. Although it might seem strange to think of the relationship between engineer and a project as similar to the relationship between mother and child there are number of similarities that make it an interesting analogy. In terms of dependency, the project, like the child, cannot take care of itself. By the same token, the worker, like the mother, depends on the survival of the project to continue to define herself as a worker' (Fletcher 1999, p. 51).

In organisations, Fletcher also refers to growth-promoting behaviours as relational activity,

'a blending of attending to the individual – creating growth fostering conditions *within* people - and concern for the collective – creating growth-fostering conditions *between* people' (Fletcher, 2001, p. 81).

Fletcher and Ruddick's' writing showed me how the invisible can be made visible, how values can significantly influence action, and they gave me the confidence to pursue my love-inspired thoughts and believe that my subjective writing would eventually have practical consequences.

In critiquing Fletcher and Ruddick, Barbara Thayer-Bacon (Thayer-Bacon, 2003) agrees with Rorty that in privileging experience and by comparing themselves with prevailing models, feminists can imply that they have access to a superior and deeper reality. This is not my intention. I do not take a gendered perspective. In writing and inquiring into the connections between love and practice I seek to develop an ungendered relational epistemology and practice.

There are other instances where growth through love is made explicit in a non-gendered educational context. Love has been put at the centre of a course entitled 'The Chain of Hearts' designed by Humberto Maturana and Sima Nisis (in Bunnall and Forsythe 2001). This is a short experiential course for teachers, where the transformational capacity of love is justified in this way:

'Living in love constitutes well being, as one lives in a fluid dynamic congruence with one's circumstances, whatever they are. In the absence of love an organism lives the continuous breakdown of those systemic coherences. ... As compensation takes place, the proper bodily configuration for the relational dynamic of love does not easily arise spontaneously, but may be evoked by the configuration of the medium; that is, through being engaged by another being which generates the appropriate relational space. The appropriate relational space' might be friendship, or therapy. In this way relational practice becomes the 'carrier for the relational space of love' (Bunnall and Forsythe 2001, p.157).

## CLARIFYING THE MEANINGS OF LOVE

As I continued with my reflective writing, the meaning of love was clarified. In Chapter Five that I began to delineate the three different aspects of love on which I decided to base my inquiry. My discernment process is re-presented in this excerpt from Chapter Five:

'The spiritual path is a process of self-development, which takes place through the medium of love and I intuitively feel that this love is carried on the rhythm of the Cosmic Tides... Wilber (1995) goes on to name the inflowing breath or homeward movement as Eros, it is the 'ascending' movement, the love that pulls the love of the Many towards the love of the One, the Universal Soul. In today's cultural terms, Eros is the focussed ascending masculine one-pointed passionate loving. The outflowing breath is its opposite, the descending flow of love, or Agape, from the One to the Many, and might be typified as the feminine, the compassionate, finding of love-in-relationship, embracing love... Wilber (1995) refers to Agape as Grace. He goes on to link the descending tide of love with the compassion of the Buddha, and the ascending tide of Eros with the Universal 'Brahman' of Hinduism. But this 'vast circle of love' is not some kind of cosmic iteration in cosmic soup, it is the soup itself. And with the collapse of the dual aspects of love comes the realisation that the movement of the tides is also love itself' (Chapter Five, p. 156).

I then wrote Chapter Seven, reflecting on an account of practice by holding this sense of eros as a part of myself. Then I wrote Chapter Eight using this same method but with an embodied sense of agape, and similarly in Chapter Ten wrote holding a sense of divine love as this collapse of the duality of eros and agape, as the fullness of love itself.

By inquiring in this way I developed my own meanings, and they are summarised here in the following paragraphs.

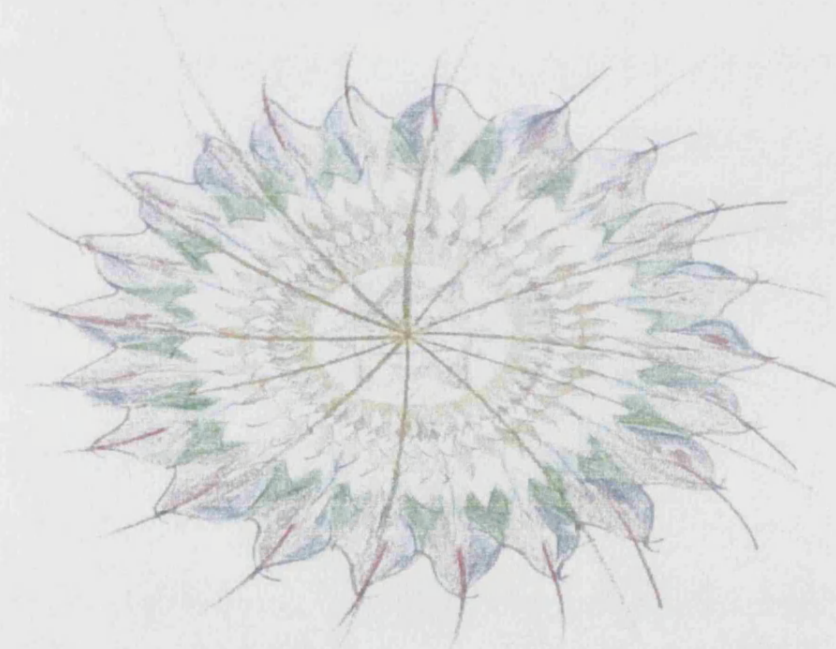
### EROS

My embodied sense of the transformatory nature of love is disclosed through a developing awareness of how the body, mind and emotions resonate to form meaning. How this inner resonance then connects with the world around me is represented in the drawing where eros is at the centre of the many petalled lotus

flower. Feeling through thinking, I became imbued with an erotic longing and commitment to spiritual practice.

When this feeling was translated into my leadership practice, I found that eros connected with idealism and this passion could be compared with the emphasis placed on organisational vision and mission.

'So what is this passion, this idealism and how does it link to mundane organisational life? Apart from helping to get me out of bed in the morning I used idealism as a tool that had instrumental value so that envisioning idealistic outcomes could usefully produce not only co-operation between staff but also bring benefit to others. Mine were idealistic visions that assumed that joining up to the cause could bring about worthy and practical effects' (Chapter Seven, p. 197)



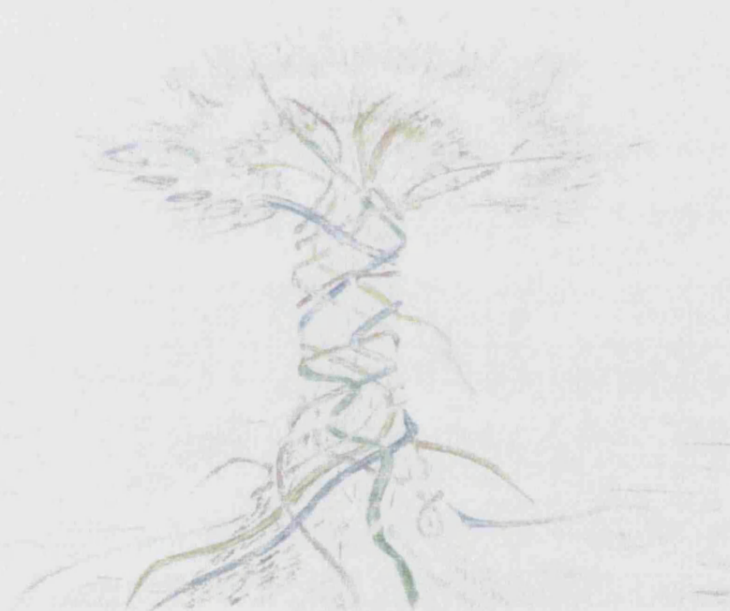
### **Eros at the Heart of Action**

As I reflected on my leadership practice through this erotic lens, my thoughts became polarised around the challenges generated by eros. Reflecting on my account of practice and developing my sensed memories of the loving meanings underlying my work, I took pleasure in this contradictory dynamic.



'But eros produces reaction, and not all are collaborative responses. Those people who worked in the Finance department, who never (or very rarely) saw either the properties or the tenants were not motivated primarily by the desire to house the homeless, but rather a desire to get the records of income and expenditure correct. They were more conscious of how staff filled in (or did not fill in) the finance forms, or being pestered by contractors impatient for their payments' (Chapter Seven, p. 199).

As I reflected on these contrasts, I drew the 'Dynamic of Contradiction' expressed as the underside of the lotus flower, with the energy of the contradictions becoming entwined around the stem through which the sap rises to feed the flower.



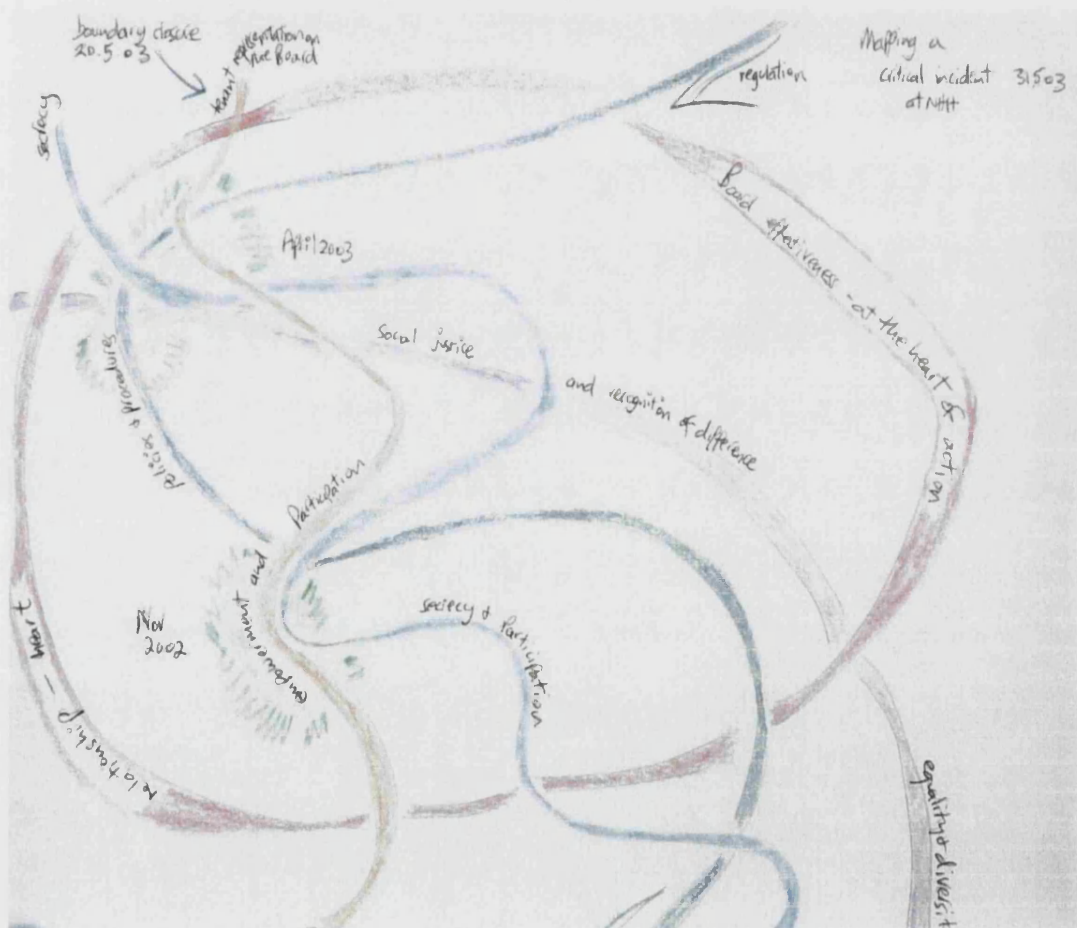
### **The Dynamic of Contradiction**

I maintained that if eros is subject to contradiction, this brings new understandings and provides energy for change. I represented the new understanding that can arise through organisational conflict by drawing the clash of values across various policy decisions to show how these contradictions affect the decisions made. I drew a conclusion: that desire must be controlled if eros is to be generative.

'The strength of passion cannot be controlled just by the Law, or by administration of justice or by punishment, by the dance of duty and generosity. These are external constraints. I must also learn control internally ... My question to anyone taking a teaching or mentoring role in developing leadership skills based on either spiritual beliefs or spiritual disciplines would be, 'Are you master of eros, are you in control of your senses?' (Chapter Seven, p.214).

## AGAPE

In Chapter eight, preparing to write about relationships at work, I gave an account of a critical incident and represented contradiction within organisation in the drawing below:



### Mapping a Critical Incident

As I looked through the lens of agape, I saw it enacted as acceptance of other in relationship as learning to step into another's shoes, perhaps to act out of

character. Agape's extreme became mental plasticity, the dissolution of personality into another. This was the ultimate surrender<sup>1</sup>.



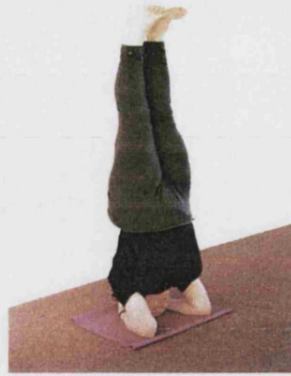
### The Practises of Love

I began to understand that the mental plasticity needed for this surrender could be learned through the embodied experience of yoga practise, and this was how I experienced the logic of love. By developing my capacity to turn my conventional world upside down I opened to possibility of becoming an instrument of love's purpose.

Because my way of knowing is primarily embodied, changing the shape and position of my posture is important. I inquired into my body / mind connection in Chapter Six, where I reflected on how I learned to do headstand and considered what this told me about the way that I learn.

<sup>1</sup> By 'surrender' I mean giving up habitual ways of living in the world, considered as an intrinsic aspect of Hindu spiritual practice.





### **Practising headstand**

This picture shows my practise, and became a metaphor for the unconventional hermeneutical and phenomenological nature of my inquiry.

'The 3<sup>rd</sup> Limb (of yoga) is *asana*, learning control of the body through postures. 'Learning control' is a critical phrase. It does not mean the brain instructing the body, verbally saying 'do this, do that' and the body obeying. It means letting the body show me what it can do' (Chapter Six, p. 173).

By setting out to allow love to influence my reflections on my practice I deliberately skewed my inquiry to unearth that which lies beneath my professional practice. I asked, how do I know and how do I learn? Do I come to know through my thoughts, through my interaction with others, through my embodied senses? How can I alter my actions? In altering action, which comes first, altered thought, altered responses to others, altered bodily sensation? As I sought answers to these questions, I came to understand that I make meaning through the direct experience of my senses, that my understanding of the world is phenomenological.

### **DIVINE LOVE**

I use the word 'divine' as a linguistic descriptor that points to that which is beyond socially constructed meaning. It is 'a more transcendent existent beyond reason' (Tarnas 1991, p.84). In this thesis I resisted fixing the meaning of 'divine' other than saying that the divine is 'good', that it is beyond cognition, and that it can be intuited but is not directly perceptible via the physical senses.

My sensed memory of divine love emanates from my experience when being taught meditation 20 years ago, the meaning of which has been developing since that time. This is my story:

'In 1984, by chance, I met someone who practised meditation. I had already started playing relaxation tapes for myself, as a way of recovering from drug withdrawal, and I knew meditation was an even better way of relaxing. I pestered this person asking to be taught meditation, and 7 months later was given a meditation technique.

It was during this teaching that I came awake, just like Sleeping Beauty, touched lightly and softly by love as I meditated. Love broke through my fear and because of this acceptance; forgiveness and hope flowered within me' (Chapter Five, p. 124).

I see the divine in relation to a divine intelligence, the source of which does not emanate from the material world. Again, I do not fix the meaning of 'divine intelligence' in my inquiring. However, I do make references to divine intelligence in particular cultural contexts. For example, in Christian terms this intelligence is God (Lewis, 1960), in Hindu terms it is Krishna or Brahman (Iyengar, 1966), in Bhuddism it is Suchness (Wilber, 1995), for Plotinus it is The One (Tarnas 1991).

I experience divine intelligence as a loving energy that I call 'divine love' and that I think of as coming from God. Others have different referents, Jack Whitehead calls love 'life affirming energy' (Whitehead, 2003). Whatever referent is used I made an assumption that divine love is always represented culturally and will be experienced personally in a unique and individual way.

CS Lewis (Lewis, 1960) distinguishes between Gift-love, 'which moves a man to work and plan and save for the future well-being of his family which he will die without sharing or seeing' and Need love 'which sends a lonely or frightened child to its mother's arms' (Lewis 1960 p.1). Both of these loves are 'Natural loves' (Lewis 1960 p.165) and are embedded in the way we live our lives and which arise through relationship with others. CS Lewis defines divine love sourced from God, who is not interested in the everyday. This divine love transforms Gift love into a capacity for loving the unlovable, and transforms Need Love into a longing for God, and this neediness makes us receptive to grace and to the possibility of transformation.

Following Lewis, in Chapter Five, I clarified the meaning of divine love by comparing it what I know of human love.

'Divine Love transforms Gift love into a capacity for loving the unlovable, and transforms Need Love into a longing for God, and this neediness makes us receptive to Grace and the possibility of transformation.

I think that this is what happened in my meditation teaching, which gave me a different, unconditional acceptance of who I was, unencumbered by place or function or cultural frame. At that time the meditation teacher did not know me; we had no previous connection except for the teaching itself. That is why I am calling this experience 'divine', it was a gift from the unknown, it was unconnected with any previous experiences, and it enabled me to love myself where I had previously considered myself to be unlovable' (Chapter Five, p. 127).

## THE TRANSMISSION OF LOVE

As my inquiry progressed, the question became, 'How do I communicate what I am learning? How do I pedagogise my knowledge of love?' Some possibilities ran through my head: could I use loving words, or say words with feeling, or talk directly about love and loving? None of these actions seemed quite appropriate, and some seemed degenerative and even potentially abusive. I had always been cautious about directly bringing spiritual into working practices. This is my memory of how I learned this at, a time when I was using affirmations on a daily basis:

I talked with Nita (personnel officer) about how we might deal with the problem of x's (staff member) attendance record. I had been using the phrase 'Forgiveness is the key to happiness' as my affirmation for the day. Every time she said something I disagreed with, I said to myself, 'Forgiveness is the key to happiness' before replying. Then later I was told that she had seriously considered taking out a grievance against me for racist behaviour! It must have been because of the way I used those affirmations...

As part of my ongoing inquiry several people agreed to take part in video'd conversations. This was an open-ended exercise intended to highlight what a 'good conversation' might consist of. The outcome was unexpected!

I had a conversation with my husband (Paul) in front of the camera. The form and style of our conversation we have had many times before. Not only do we not agree, we cannot agree on the meanings of words. In the CD-ROM included with this submission we are talking about space. I am talking about the ever-moving space of inclusionality<sup>2</sup>; he is talking about scientific definitions of what space is.

He is being critical, tense, shouting, elaborating his point of view and showing how ridiculous my understanding is. I am listening very closely, because I know that what he is saying is important. In most people's eyes what he says is 'true' and certainly verifiable by scientific method. I am laughing, because we are repeating old patterns and wriggle as I might, I cannot escape.

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<sup>2</sup> I am referring here to Rayner's theories, discussed in the next Chapter

When Mad and Jack<sup>3</sup> saw this, they said that Paul's attitude and language was abusive. This is what Mad wrote in an email:

'The story depends on the fact, for me, that Paul is your husband and you live together. This is not just any person. He is the man in your life. Any viewer, including me, imagines their own view of what a loving relationship might look like when they think the words 'husband;' or 'man I live with'. The shocking thing about the video is how abusive it feels when you watch it...' (Madeline Church, private email communication 15.11.04)

I had not found the conversation abusive; I wanted to listen to what Paul was saying. I value what he says, not the way that he says it. As he is speaking I hold a sense of love in my body; it is an embodied vision. I stayed in touch with a sense memory of how Paul is willing to help me by agreeing to have a video'd conversation. I began to understand this as the tacit enaction of eros. Because we live together I have tried to understand how he sees the world; I have tried to get under his skin. I want to understand how he uses language and emotion so that we can communicate better. I began to understand this is as the tacit enaction of agape.

It was Mad and Jack pointing to it that enabled me to name (rather than feel) my embodied knowing. I had held sensed the memory of love, but in an 'unthinking' way. [Bernstein refers to 'the unthinkable' as meanings consumed by context (in Bernstein 2000, p.31)]<sup>4</sup>. Now I could see love coming through my action, and see how it influenced and maintained the connection between us, despite Paul's frustration. It was this recognition that helped me to summarise my reflections on eros and agape and then develop my ideas about a pedagogy of presence in Chapter Nine.

'Learning with love through action is an internal reordering that enables my tacit knowledge to come into action without my necessarily thinking about it. Love is invisible and implicitly held as I perceive the relation between 'the impulse to move and the movement ... the intention to think and an impulse to think' (Bohm, 1996 p.25). This tacit reordering enables love to pass through my intention and

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<sup>3</sup> Mad is Madeline Church, a member of my University Peer Group, and Jack is Jack Whitehead, my Supervisor at the University of Bath.

<sup>4</sup> Bernstein's theories of pedagogic communication are covered in the next Chapter.



into action within the pedagogic relation, and by writing and reflecting, I have made this tacit knowledge explicit' (Chapter Nine, p. 260).

On a later occasion this clip was presented to a group of fourteen people in Jack's Monday evening conversation group. Almost everyone saw this conversation as abusive where love's presence could be acknowledged. There was one dissenter.

Later, having asked her to say more about what she saw in the video, I received the following comment:

'In the video clip I thought I saw two people who were obviously very comfortable with each other having one of those conversations where one of them was exasperated by the other. I didn't feel that one was rejecting the other or even being abusive, as it was the ideas raised that he seemed to reject, not the person explaining them. My assumption would be that this was done in a relationship experiencing love. ... I have loving relationships in which disagreements and hard words are contained and accepted because the relationship is more important and the disagreements are aired in a spirit of trust, safety and acceptance. (Erica Holley, Private email communication 5.3.2005)

Whilst Erica acknowledged the presence of a loving relationship, she did not see the pedagogic transmission of love, but does see 'two people who are obviously very comfortable with each other.' Erica's perspective issued a challenge to my claim that love can be transmitted through a pedagogy of presence.

I needed to make a judgement, to decide how her point of view would influence my claim. Mad and Jack had seen this pedagogic transmission and 13 other people had acknowledged it in a subsequent discussion. I reflected on Erica's challenge in this way:

'I make decisions by noticing my bodily responses. Noticing the resonances, I follow their direction and try to act in unison with this sensuous awareness. If I can keep an inner / outer awareness then I can follow the inner sensing into the outer action. I can tell whether I have been 'true' to that initial intention by the direction that the next movement takes me to, the next iteration of the flow. This is how I assess whether my action is 'good' enough, whether my inner logic has

been integrated into my outer actions. This is a process of realisation, a process of 'seeing' and is non-verbal' (Chapter Six, p. 178).

I have defined a pedagogy of presence as comprising a tacit pedagogical relation, that is, as 'a modification ...of knowledge or a practice occurs where neither members may be aware of it' (Bernstein, 2000 p.200). Taking this together with the noumenal quality of love itself, with the responses of 15 other people, with my resonant inward responses, I decided that my claim - to be able to become an instrument of love's purpose through a pedagogy of presence – was legitimate and had been represented in the video.

## PART ONE: THEORY

### CHAPTER TWO

#### PROPOSITIONAL FRAMING

*In this chapter, I make my theoretical framing explicit and write about the theories that have influenced me. I illustrate what I mean by bringing forward journal entries and examples of practice from later chapters.*

*I start by linking organisational experiences with feminist post-structuralism, go on to consider my way of learning-in-relation through empathetic responsiveness and then highlight three ways in which I use my writing to develop my inquiry.*

*In the following section, I refer to the philosophy of Kant and Hegel in relation to the resolution of contradiction and refer to Spinoza's perspective on 'feeling thought'. In a post-modern take on language I begin to develop the ordering principles of language that I use later as a reflective tool in my inquiry .*

*In an example of reflective writing I show how I use the theory frame and the ordering principles of language to move my inquiry forward.*

*I go on to contrast religious constructions of self and show how spiritual practices influences learning. I refer to the previous example of reflective writing to show how spiritual practice has influenced my way of learning.*

*I introduce Bortroft's ideas of holistic consciousness, and his ideas about disclosure, relatedness and coalescence. I compare this with analytic modes of inquiry and Hegel's concept of unity.*

*Then I discuss theories of Inclusionality (Rayner, 2004), including ideas of the Complex Self, and the dynamical inter-relation of boundaries.*

*Finally I write about and Bernstein's theories of pedagogic communication Bernstein (2000), the insulation of boundaries and the creation of context. . It was these theories that enabled me to bring my inquiry to a conclusion.*

## FEMINIST THEORIES

### Organisational practices and the poststructural standpoint

*In this section I point to the feminist theories that have influenced my thinking, and my practice over the past 25 years. They are important in this inquiry because I think that if I am to act well as an instrument of love, then I must take notice of how power operates in organisations.*

My aim is to bring my experience of the transformational nature of love into my organisational practice. I have worked in a leadership role in housing organisations for over 30 years. In that time I have come to appreciate how power operates in organisations, as well as how power influences and can be influenced. This excerpt from an essay I wrote in 1992 gives one example of this dynamic:

‘This narrative has highlighted two actors upon whom the main task of implementation (of the strategy) rested. Of the four senior managers, there were two women, myself (the Deputy Director), the Director (we shared the responsibility for delivering) and two men, the Finance Director and Housing Services Director...this female axis of power was challenged by the FD and the HSD in two ways. One tactic was a series of late night and early morning discussions that led to a fragmented and informal bargaining outside meetings, and the other was to raise the profile of their respective departments by mutually aiding each other in channelling and influencing discussion in management team meetings. When challenged their actions were denied, and how far these tactics were consciously conceived and carried out is not clear. They were nevertheless significant in their effects, particularly in relation to corporate decision making, departmental and interdepartmental administrative systems and the borrowing of private finance’ (Lohr, 1992 p.6)

My experience of leadership both as a Director at WHHA and as a Board member at NHH<sup>1</sup> leads me to consider an Althusserian position on the ideological capacity of leaders to exercise social control by structuring practices that also

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<sup>1</sup> WHHA is the acronym for the housing association that I worked in until 2000 as Deputy Chief Executive. NHH is the acronym for the housing association in which I am currently Chair of the Board.

determine individual perceptions (Althusser, 1985). An example of this, from Chapter Seven, is replicated here:

'Increasingly, the most important aspect of WHHA's culture, noted by more than one systems analyst, was the general aversion to written knowledge, either by reading about how an action should be carried out or by recording the action that had been taken! We relied more on knowledge gained through watching and coaching others, rather than passing written information around.

There were two ways we, as Directors, dealt with this. Firstly we used the authority of the Board members and Sub-committees, who expected regular reporting to create internal management deadlines and secondly we implemented more comprehensive IT systems. Increasing computerisation meant that we could slice the business processes up into smaller and smaller pieces, in order to get more reliable data...' (Chapter Seven, p. 205).

Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses are also reminiscent of Bordieu's 'habitus' (Bordieu, 1977) where habitus is 'a mode of generation of practices' (ibid. p.72) that are the product of the unconscious reproduction of attitudes, language and cultural practices that are considered to be natural and reasonable.

What I emphasise here is the power of social practices in creating social restrictions and disciplining thinking. I seek to recognise this power through a critical reading of my texts<sup>2</sup> in my reflective writing and in my accounts of practice.

My feminist poststructural standpoint does not absolve me of responsibility for, or protect me from the danger of, reproducing existing power relations, but it does allow me the possibility of developing a critical edge. This is an example of what I mean:

'I had been biding my time over the issue of ratification of decisions made outside the Board meetings. I had raised this in relation to the behaviour of our Consultants at the time of transfer, and again in relation to the conduct of Board meetings, and yet again when referring to the relationship between the Board and its Sub-Committees.

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<sup>2</sup> I show how I do this through the ordering principles of language later in this Chapter.

I decide that there is a problem about lack of openness that could well not withstand very close scrutiny, but that the decisions that had been made were in line with usual housing association practice. I assume the communication problems are arising partly from ignorance of how housing association Boards are expected to conduct themselves, ignorance of the meaning of Housing Corporation requirements, and an experience of 'cabinet government' and party politics' (Chapter Eight, p. 228).

At this critical edge I am concerned with uncovering ideologically predetermined behaviours that may be restricting our individual capacity (and therefore our organisational capacity) to participate fully, either in the processes of joint decision-making, or in accessing the services provided by housing organisations. I consider one of the tasks of being a leader is to open up options, to create more choice at the critical edge of ideology and allow a range of choices to inform better decision-making. The action account that I give in Chapter Eight shows how I identify a critical edge and wait for an opportunity to influence:

'I ... felt very ambivalent about how NHH is supporting tenant Board members. It looks OK on the surface, but actually there are all kinds of difficult ethics at play for tenants, and in addition, they do not have experience of high-level decision making forums like this. ...

This incident has come to a close now, but I continue to look for opportunity to raise the issue of tenant board member support when the openings occur. Knowing also that those who took part in these events will weave their different stories' (Chapter Eight, p. 232).

I want to bring the power of love into an organisational context. However, I also realise that love in these circumstances would not necessarily be a transformatory force for good, and that in a dialectical world, any force whether for good or ill is likely to create opposition.

## Learning in relation

*My question, 'How may I become an instrument of love's purpose', indicates that I need to understand how I learn. I started this thesis by clarifying my experience of love. Earlier I inquired into how love might be received in an organisational context. Now I am thinking about how I might become an instrument, using feminist theory to explain how I learn.*

Jordan et.al (Jordan, Kaplan, Baker Miller, Stiver & Surrey 1991) suggest women (in general) learn, not by being separate and independent, but in an emotional relation. This self-in-relation is characterised by emotional dependency and empathetic responsiveness, where learning takes place through mutuality, recognition of similarity and connectedness. Learning is part of a continuum, of 'holding the other as part of the self' (ibid. p. 62). This is how I explain my learning, using as an example the memory of my relationships with other young mothers 35 years ago:

We nurtured each other, taking it in turns to tell interminable stories, about pregnancy; about whether or not to have more children, about birth trauma, about money, the list is endless. Much of it was complaint. This kind of chat was repeated over and over for hours and hours. In my experience this type of conversation is common amongst women caring for small children.

We were conscious of growing the next generation of adults and realised the enormity of the task. I wanted to learn how to do it, to have feedback when I thought it was going well, and the unconditional acceptance of others with whom to share the burden when I failed to get it 'right'.

The writing of researchers and therapists at the Stone Center for research on Women ([www.wcwonline.org](http://www.wcwonline.org)) highlight emotional differences between boys and girls in the early relationship with the mother, which may help to explain the high level of emotional component in women's conversations.

My experience can be theorised in this way:

'The earliest mental representation of the self, then, is of a self whose core – which is emotional – is attended to by other(s) and in turn begins to attend to the emotions of the other(s). Part of this internal image of oneself includes feeling the other's emotions and *acting on* them as they are in interplay with one's own emotions. This means that the beginnings of the concept of self are not those of a static and lone self being ministered to by another (incidentally this construct has a strong male flavour) but rather of a self inseparable from dynamic interaction. And the central character of that interaction involves attending to each other's mental states and emotions....this early mental representation of the self in girls can be described as a more encompassing sense of self, in contrast with the more boundaried, or limited self, that is encouraged in boys from a very young age' (Jordan et al., 1991 p.14).

This process involves establishing the recognition of the self in the other, which requires a relaxation of the boundaries of the self, but no disintegration of the self. Instead of annihilation there is an enhancement of self through an alignment with the other. This is a mutual and shared connection, which brings both cognitive and emotional aspects of the self into a jointly held space in which learning can take place (ibid. p.82). Creating shared connection is integral to my inquiry. Creating and acting in context is expressed in a variety of ways later in my inquiry, as a lotus flower mandala in Chapter Five, as well as one of my standards of judgement:

- I aim to recontextualise (reframe) what I am, or we are doing now; so that our joint work can become easier and more pleasurable.

I use the concept 'holding the other as part of the self' in many different ways in this thesis. Again, the seeds of this way of learning go back to when I was a young woman. Thinking myself back into those days, I can see how the emotional boundaries between friends was often blurred, and how this helped me to maintain a strong enough sense of identity to enable me to 'mother' effectively enough.

And this is echoed in theory:

'Our definition of relationship implies a sense of knowing oneself and others through a process of mutual relational interaction over time and space...In this model the self gains vitality and enhancement in relationship and is not reduced



or threatened by connections...This sense of continuity is a basic aspect of the mother-child relationship ... this experience of continuity – the holding of the other as part of the self – as a component of all real relationships' (Jordan et.al.1991, p.62).

So, my inquiry about how I might become an instrument of love is established firstly around paying attention to my own experiences of love, and then interacting with love over space and time seeing practice through the eye of love. It means that in phrasing my question 'how may I become an instrument of love?' I am deliberately merging the 'I' in order to connect with 'love'. I lose my 'I' in this question, in order to explore how far it might be possible to become love and remain an effective actor in the world.

'Experiencing the 'sense of the sublime' connects me to my self, other selves and the world around me, and brings my sense of self into alignment. I do not comprehend a collapse of the emotional into the rational, as Ken Wilbur describes it (see above), but the sense of the sublime that is able to bring together the mental and emotional aspects of the mind into a unity, into coherence. This is not losing my identity but gaining a heightened sense of perception' (Chapter Five, p.139).

'The other' in my inquiry follows Ruddick's (1989) exemplar as she develops loving mothering practices. In her case she takes the child as the 'other' and develops concepts of preservative love and fostering growth. In a similar way, I hold the sense of the divine as part of myself as I inquire into my lived experience and practice. I refer to this as 'holding the sense of "the other" as part of the self in the act of writing'. I follow Ruddick in allowing feeling to influence thought, holding my question about love in organisation as part of my self. This is how I express this in Chapter Eight:

'Now I am reflecting on the transformational nature of love by 'thinking through' agape and considering the way that conversation develops relationships and transmits emotion in organisation. Fletcher (Fletcher 2001) maintains that following relational logic, staying within the perspective of that logic, creates a discursive space in which the relational aspect of organisational life is 'allowed to retain its full power as a subversive story' (ibid. p. 84). I think that what Fletcher means is that taking an uncritical subjective position on relationships at work

creates the potential for a different perspective that challenges the cultural hegemony' (Chapter Eight, p.235).

In looking for deeper meanings my inquiry becomes deliberately boundary-less so that the difference between methodology, lived experience, and practice, become arbitrary. However, in presenting my inquiry process and my findings to the reader, I have made the following distinctions between methodology, lived experience and practice:

- My methodology incorporates first person action research methods, spiritual practices and Ruddick's exemplar: holding the sense of the other in loving relation with the self.
- My lived experience covers informal unstructured relationships and embodied knowing.
- My practice refers to my work as a yoga teacher, as a Director in a housing association and as the Chair of the Board of a housing association.

## Language

*In this section I provide a theoretical perspective on the way I use language. This is important because I deliberately use language to express feeling.*

From a Foucauldian post-modern perspective, power is generated through knowledge and the construction of discourse, and it is the language and the construction of the meaning through discourse (rather than an Althusserian distortion of the subject created through institutional practices) from which knowledge emerges and truth is formulated (Foucault, 1984).

However, Saussure's theory of the 'sign' (consisting of the signified as the meaning and the signifier as the sound or written image) suggested that 'chains of signs' derived their meaning from the difference between other chains of signs. This is important to feminists (Weedon, 1987 p. 23) because Saussure considered that the meaning located in signs to be fixed (ibid. p.24). However Derrida developed the idea of 'différance' and deferral where the signified and the signifiers only have meaning in relation to each other, and where the meaning is not only not fixed, but is constantly being deferred. Thus it is only through contextualisation of language that social meanings are produced. As Weedon points out: 'What it [*the signifier*] means at any particular moment depends on the discursive relations within which it is located, and it is open to constant rereading and reinterpretation (Weedon 1987, p. 25 [*my italics*]). These theories have three implications for my inquiry.

Firstly, I am able to judge the difference between my intention and my action by seeing the 'signified' (my meaning) and its outcome as 'signifier' (image) written in my texts. Reflection on my texts identifies discontinuities in the relation of my meaning (the signified) and my writing (the signifier). This is an example taken from Chapter Five:

I buy a chair, and show it to you, 'Yes', you say 'It is a very nice chair.'

I like the colour and shape, but you do not. It is likely that if we talk about it, we will both be able to understand why you do not like it and I do.

We take it in turns to sit on the chair. I do not think it is comfortable, you think it is. It is less likely that we will be able to understand each other to the same degree, because the description of discomfort has become more subjective and this probably makes our respective understandings less easily comparable.

In fact I might feel so uncomfortable sitting on the chair that I think 'This isn't a proper chair, I cannot sit on it' and I cease to think of it as a chair.

But I think it is beautiful, which is actually why I bought it, and so I keep it in the corner of my living room.

Every time I walk past this beautiful object I think 'I do like that', but I do not think of it as a chair.

Then I cease to notice it at all – it has become part of my mental furniture.

Occasionally when visitors come round they point to this beautiful object and say, 'That's nice where did you get that from?' And at other times when visitors come round they sit on it, and I think 'Oh! They think it's a chair!'

Some time later, perhaps years later, I am hovering around it and I get annoyed with how heavy it is to move, and as I pass by I start thinking that perhaps it does not fit into my colour scheme. And then another thought occurs, that the furniture in my living room would work a lot better if that object wasn't there any more.

So, I ask the people who admired it in the past if they would like it. I do not know if they think of it as I do, as an art object or whether they think of it as a chair. It doesn't matter.

However if no friend wants it, I put an advertisement in the local paper saying, 'Chair for Sale!' (Chapter Five, pp.148-149).

Secondly, rereading and reflecting on my journalled accounts I use the descriptions of what I did, take feedback from others and my responses, and then learn from the differences. This is an example of such learning taken from the case example in Chapter Three

'There is a game going on here, she is manipulating us (me), and I want to step aside from the possibility that we are about to play the same game with the same rules for the fourth time. Fuck it. THIS is how I feel; I will play the same game as her, be childish, and blurt out what I am feeling.

I am unable to respond to the victim asking to be made victim again, asking for help and ignoring opportunities (as I see them) to practise differently.

I do not care that I upset her because I am tired of upsetting her. She does not alter what she wants, she keeps asking for the same thing over and over, but not taking it, getting upset, being upsetting to others, she refuses to just take what she wants, and wants to get upset with us for not giving it to her.

I keep asking for what I want, and when it is offered I refuse to take up the opportunity and start feeling stuck. I feel the same way when I think that I see another person getting stuck in their repeating patterns.

I didn't notice my own repeating addictive pattern settling in! (Chapter Three, pp.90-91).

Thirdly, when at the beginning of my inquiry I needed to make new connections between my loving personal intentions and my leadership practice, I found that writing my lived experience provided the poetic images that eventually enabled me to contextualise and locate my practice. By recontextualising my inquiry in this way I create images (signifiers) that encouraged the development of my meanings (signifieds), which eventually resulted in my being able to both theorise (create new signifiers) and to live my values through my practice expressed in a pedagogy of presence. The inquiry process was lengthy; the point I am making here is that the poetic, semiotic language of Chapter Five was a precursor to my eventual findings.

Julia Kristeva (in Weedon 1987) posits that the repressed feminine mode of language, rather than being a product of the female libido and therefore biologically based, is a semiotic mode of signification. The semiotic mode is unstable; it arises in the psychic subjects' pre-symbolic and pre-oedipal phase, and as a result it challenges the symbolic order and the unity of the psyche attained in the post-oedipal stage (ibid. p.70).

Following Kristeva, my use of language reflects this semiotic mode, and I use its capacity to go underneath the logic of the symbolic order to re-order my knowledge. I respond to my accounts of practice by writing reflectively, gathering up ideas, looking through the lens of love, allowing meaning to surface as it emerges, rather than finding meaning within a pre-existing ideological frame.

For example, this is how I come to write my first reflection on agape. Here I interweave embodied knowing, with poetry, with a passing reference to ethics, to Spinoza:

'If eros is the inhalation, the breath that seeks the divine, focusing attention on the object of desire with the energy rising upwards from the base of the spine near the sexual organs, all subtle sensibility lost in the drive to fulfil its objective. Then agape is the exhalation, the breath that releases the divine into everyday life. It broadens awareness and acts through the heart, opening, widening and responding, carrying its innate capacity to encompass paradox and dissonance.

I see agape everywhere like the intoxicating perfume of the lotus flower. It enables my embodied awareness and embodied knowing to happen. If my body lives in tune with agape, then it becomes the dance of life.

This aspect of love does not look for goals, purposes or achievement of any kind.... Agape does not distinguish between the good and the bad, or between friends or enemies...

For Spinoza 'God is the origin of all there is before our senses...and is most clearly manifest in living creatures' (Damasio, 2003 p.273) and there is no distinction between thought and feeling rather a determination to bring positive feeling into relationship. So finally with Spinoza there is a deliberate 'colouring' of perception brought about through the reasoning / feeling capacity of the body / mind acting in the moment...(Chapter Eight, p.233).

As I reflected on my writings, I was looking for the underlying meanings, the discontinuity between my use of language and its social meaning, hoping to notice addictive or habitual patterns of thinking, expressing myself poetically, working semiotically.

## **MODERN AND POST- MODERN PHILOSOPHY**

*In this section I consider contradiction in organisation from the point of view of western philosophy. I do this in order to clarify three issues that I address later on within my inquiry in Part Two and Part Three, these are:*

- (1) how different cultural constructions of self affects the way leaders implement organisational goals. I give an example of the issue I am addressing in my practice, and illustrate what I mean from later Chapters.*
- (2) the relation of difference to general rules and universal principles,*
- (3) the relation of cognition with emotion and feeling in western philosophy.*

### **Dialectical logic and modernity**

My inquiry is an appreciation of how 'love at work' can operate through my leadership activity in a multi-ethnic organisational culture. It is in this context that I experience opposition and resistance to the implementation of organisational vision.

Kant and Hegel are often referred to as the philosophical architects of the modern world, and much of their work is concerned with reconciling contradiction and paradox. Through the writings of Ilyenkov (Ilyenkov, 1977) and Tarnas (Tarnas, 1991) I traced some of the traditional threads of western thought.

I start with Tarnas' statement that, 'With Hegel's decline there passed from the modern intellectual arena the last culturally powerful metaphysical system claiming the existence of a universal order accessible to human awareness' (Tarnas, 1999 p.383). As I read about Hegel's ideas I compared his philosophical search for unity with the challenges I experience as a leader in implementing shared vision. I write about this in Chapter Seven:

'In many urban areas housing organisations employ a wide range of people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Many staff do not 'buy in' easily to Western ways of thinking, acting or relating. Additionally, and depending on their

age and lifestyle, staff members may have or make deeper and more satisfying connections outside the work environment. The vision and aims of the organisation (WHHA) was developed within a culture that is a white middle-aged middle class version of secular Christianity and seems a million miles away from the Nigerian administrator who (aggressively) keeps telling everyone that Africa is more than one country and explaining more than once that Nigeria has more than one tribe.

In a multicultural organisation, as WHHA was, the role, ideology and language of organisational leadership is unlikely to be received or understood in predictable ways because there are differing cultural constructions of self (Chapter Seven, p.200).

I resonate with Hegel's belief in the categories of the human mind as being also 'ontological categories of the universe' (ibid. p. 351), and I feel the erotic power that belief in the transcendent generates. These are my 'feeling thoughts' that are curtailed by the dissonant actions of staff, who clearly do not share the same understanding of the relation of individual action to shared goals. I need to think this contradiction through in order to understand the 'others' perspective.

For Hegel contradiction did not arise from a mistake in reasoning, but from a misunderstanding about the nature of thought itself. Ilyenkov says that Hegel considered that,

'in real affairs man demonstrates the real modes of his thinking more adequately than in his narratives of them. But that being so, man's *actions* ... must be considered *manifestations of his thoughts*, as acts objectifying his ideas, thoughts, plans and conscious intentions' (Ibid. p. 175 [*authors italics*]).

What Ilyenkov makes clear is that Hegel considers dialectics as 'the process both of elucidating contradictions and concretely resolving them in the corpus of a higher and more profound stage of rational understanding of the same object' (Ibid. p. 190). In Hegel's critique of Kant, he resists the notion that moral rightness can be proved by a logical process of demonstrating universality, and instead suggested that rightness could be established through the moral principles guiding the reasoning process (in Benhabib, 1992 p. 27).



I agree with Hegel's position partly because he takes a broad view of what constitutes thought and because I agree that there is a universal order that is accessible to human awareness, and this influences my thinking and my actions. Benhabib (1992) makes the point that Hegel also wanted to find the universal in the principles underpinning thought, and again this is a project that I have sympathy with. I agree that human beings appear to share similar capacities for thinking, feeling and acting. I address some of these issues in Chapter Five in relation to social construction:

'I think that there are essences of truth in all social constructions, so that the superficial surfaces of what we mean by love or fear or death, and how it is symbolised, are contested and change over time. ... So that the duality and plurality of values, emotions and intentions come into and out of fashion, but that the relation between the mind (brain) and the body, the relation of mind (intellect) and matter, taken with an awareness of the way that these relate to each other have always remained essentially the same. So, constructions of self and the relationship between self and others may be many and various in the Western world, but there remains an essential underlying structure of humanness' (Chapter Five, p.143).

Hegel finds new synthesis from paradox, but Kant finds general rules that,

'would subordinate the power of thinking...to organise all separate generalisations and judgements of experience into unity' (Ilyenkov 1977, p. 103).

Kant set out to 'create a single system, a single sense of law, a single system of all the main concepts of life' (ibid. p. 114). He develops a universal rational order that could explain difference. He attempts to do this by formulating the concept of antinomy, which is 'a state of logical contradiction' (Ibid. p. 105) which must be eliminated by 'discarding from logic exactly half of its categorical schemes of synthesis' (Ibid. p. 108).

Whilst Hegel develops ideas of shared vision based on moral principles, Kant develops ideas based on a universal system of thought. It is one thing to consider contradiction as creating the possibility of new knowledge, and quite another to consider that contradiction can be resolved through cognitive rationalism within some sort of logical, universal scheme.

Tamas maintains that on the one hand Kant recognises the importance of scientific thinking, and on the other hand 'he defined direction of modern religious thought. .... Inner personal experience, not objective demonstration or dogmatic belief, was the true ground of religious meaning' (Ibid. p.350). Kant leaves the issues raised by antinomies clarified but not resolved. He clarifies the process of resolution by distinguishing between inner subjective experience and outer objective rationalisations so that the,

'task of the philosopher was therefore radically redefined. ... Thus philosophy's true task was to investigate the formal structure of the mind, for only there would it find the true origin and foundations for certain knowledge in the world' (Ibid. p. 347).

The successors to Kant went in two directions. One direction towards Idealism and Hegel, and the other towards Materialism and a scientific paradigm (Tamas 1999 pp. 351-354). Also in Grayeff (Grayeff 1970, p.1).

Benhabib confirms the cognitive focus of the western philosophy when she writes'

'A major weakness of cognitive and proceduralist ethical theories since Kant has been their reductionist treatment of the emotional and affective bases of moral judgement and conduct. ... I would like to suggest that very often ethical cognitivism has been confused with ethical rationalism, and the neglect of the affective and emotive bases of ethics is a result of the narrow "rationalism" of most neo-Kantian theories' (Benhabib 1992 p. 49).

The western neo-Kantian mind privileges a set of overarching beliefs that hide the emotional and material bases of knowledge and ignores the passionate idealism inherent within the Enlightenment project. Because of this, contradiction and difference become silenced. The dangers and consequences of this hegemony are challenged by Foucault and post-modern philosophy, by feminist theory, and writers like Edward Said writing about colonialism (see Walia 2002) and Jonathan Raban (Raban 2003) and Terry Eagleton (Eagleton 2003) writing about the dangers of religious fundamentalism. Kantian influences have meant that western philosophy has privileged cognitive analysis, avoided passion and ignored silence and absence.

My inquiry into 'love at work' avoids the hegemony of the grand narrative of the Enlightenment, because it actively addresses and inquires into contradiction and paradox. I have deliberately identified incongruity throughout my descriptions of experience and my practice. In seeking to give prominence to 'the affective and emotional bases of ethics' (as Benhabib puts it), I am also challenging the traditional nature of academia.

## Spinoza

In the course of my reading about Kant and Hegel, I came across references to Spinoza. Ilyenkov describes him as a thinker who found that, 'There are not two different and originally contrary objects of investigation – body and thought – but only *one single* object, which is the *thinking body* of living real man...' (Ilyenkov 1977 p. 31). Spinoza does not divorce mind from body; instead he considered that,

'The activity we call reason or thinking is the capacity of a thinking body to mould its own action actively to the shape of any other body' (Ibid. p. 47).

Spinoza, like Hegel, did not think that thought was a solely cognitive function. He considered reflection as an active and reflexive process. Damasio (2003) says that Spinoza made connections between feeling and reasoned thinking and distinguished between the trigger mechanism of emotion and 'reasoned emotionally competent stimuli capable of producing the more positive feeling states' (ibid. p. 273). Spinoza went on to

'describe(d) the experience of the divine as pure feeling, a pleasurable feeling that is a source of completion, meaning and enthusiasm for life' (ibid. p.282).

Here was a western philosopher who allowed feeling to influence his text, where feeling is not necessarily triggered by emotion or desire, but could be cultivated as an adjunct to thought. It was reading about Spinoza's philosophy that enabled me to justify colouring thought with feeling, referred to in Chapter One, and which enabled me to write in Chapter Eight:

'For Spinoza 'God is the origin of all there is before our senses...and is most clearly manifest in living creatures' (Damasio, 2003 p.273) and there is no

distinction between thought and feeling rather a determination to bring positive feeling into relationship. So finally with Spinoza there is a deliberate 'colouring' of perception brought about through the reasoning / feeling capacity of the body / mind acting in the moment' (Chapter Eight, p.234).

### **Models of leadership**

Now I consider how these philosophies have influenced models of adult development. Whilst Wilber maintains that it is possible to reach these higher states of consciousness whilst living in ancient traditional societies or in non-Western educated communities, he tends to privilege the logical and integrative capacity of cognitive structures. I express my concern with Wilbur's viewpoint in Chapter Five:

'whilst the stage model theory remains an abstraction that has no application. However, Wilber (Wilbur 1995 p.361) refers to stages as hierarchies or rankings, which were translated in the Catholic Church from contemplative awareness to political orders of power. ... I look at Torbert's leadership development profile (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert 2000) and its application in organisation' (Chapter Five, p.161).

And I go on address this in more detail in Chapter Seven, using my understanding of theory to ground my critique:

'There is too much reliance and an implicit assumption that the relations of thinking, feeling, acting and being are, if not in a strict linear relation to each other, at least show a discernible logic that just leads to 'inevitable mutual interdependence'. When these combine with a linear model of adult development within a frame of the organisational mission, which is also necessarily 'top-down', then I begin to understand my resistance to the SCT and the LDF. Living the dynamic of 'mutual interdependence' does not automatically arise as a consequence of cognitive development' (Chapter Seven, p.220).

In general, models of leadership tend to follow Kantian rationality, and are based on developing propositional knowing, taking that knowing into action and focussing on improving skills to achieve a particular outcome.

I had hoped that I might become a more loving leader by developing my leadership skills. With this in mind I turned to the ideas of Torbert (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert, 2000) and Griffin (2002).

### **Torbert's model of leadership**

Torbert's model of leadership (the Leadership Development Framework) delineates seven stages of leadership development based on Kohlberg's model of adult development.

My objections were more 'felt' than 'reasoned' and so I looked further into the theoretical basis, asking 'Is my intuitive feeling theoretically justifiable?' What I found was firstly that Kant's ideas are predicated on creating a grand meta-narrative that seeks to accommodate contradiction, and I knew that the dangers of this hegemony had been highlighted by feminists and postmodernism. Secondly, because of Kant's enormous influence we have 'forgotten' that thought cannot be reduced solely to cognition. Both Kohlberg and Torbert rely heavily on this particular construction of self.

I conclude that the Leadership Development Framework (LDF) is probably appropriate for individuals with certain characteristics; it encourages development of particular skills, but this makes it culturally specific and likely to be more conservative than radical in terms of organisational development. I decided that the LDF might be a useful tool for outside consultants working with management team, but it did not sit easily within the remit of my inquiry.

### **Griffin and the emergence of leadership**

Griffin (2002), together with Shaw (2002) and others from the University of Hertfordshire's Complexity Management Centre, take a radical approach based on Complexity Theory. Griffin proposes that effective leaders emerge from within organisational relationships. He maintains that,

'The resolution of paradox in thought as *both* individuals with freedom *and* self organising natural systems has led us to think ... of individuals collectively as ...subject to the "system's" unfolding of intention. ... We also think of individuals as being outside such systems so that they are free and ethically responsible for controlling and changing the system' (Ibid. p.9).

Griffin suggests resolving differences in practice rather with reference to a particular theory, or a system of beliefs, or pre-given predefined values. He rejects any notion of the transcendent, according transcendence to a meta-narrative (that is just another 'system') and makes his case from a Materialist perspective in opposition to Kantian logic.

Therefore, management theories based on Complexity Theory resist *a priori* knowledge, the theoretical elimination of contradiction through reasoning, and insist that paradox must be resolved in practice. Not only is the Kantian notion of 'the whole' as separate from 'the part' rejected, but Complexity Theory also rejects the pre-existence of symbolic values or ideals.

Whilst I particularly like Shaw's (2002) case by case exposition of how Complexity Theory works in practice in organisational consultancy, these authors do not address the key issue of how imagined community influences individual decision-making, and vice versa. Whilst ethical frameworks may be historically and culturally specific, it is this framework that makes it possible, even on a case by case basis, to discriminate between good and bad practice. If there is no value frame I do not see how it is possible to make good judgements.

I decided that I could not agree with either Griffin or Shaw, because it is not possible to ignore foundational values and still know the difference between good and bad. I expressed my decision this way in Chapter Eight:

'Like Shaw, I too dislike the idea of love being used as the 'glue' that binds a workforce together and which implies a certain fundamentalism and an avoidance of the shadow side. However, my proviso is that personal value and belief systems are still enabled and can still influence others within the fluidity of the complexity frame, because otherwise there is no ethical standard that operates except that which arises in conversation. And we increasingly do not have a

public model of what virtues are commendable, and that is important even if it's only purpose is for us to contradict it' (Chapter Eight, p.246).

I decided instead that it is possible to develop, judge and improve a value-laden practice provided it is open to change through active participation in social frameworks.

## Language

*Lastly, I look at how post-modernism allows the text to disclose its rules, and from this develop the idea of experiencing the underlying meaning of the text by responding to it intuitively. I illustrate what I mean with several examples taken from later Chapters.*

In the section on feminist theory, I made the distinction between language as a system of signs and as an expression of a pre-symbolic order. In the post-Kantian post-modern era, language can also be perceived as the creator of new meaning.

As I reflect on my journalled accounts I am deconstructing my text in order to find new knowledge. I am doing this not by deconstructing my language but by getting into the feeling that the words evoke, stepping aside from conventional interpretations. I do this in this way at the end of Chapter Eight, where I begin to connect aspects of spiritual practice with aspects of organisational life:

'In the first reflective iteration, I develop a sensed connection with agape through the interpretative embodied frame of joyfulness...

In the following iteration, I take Fletcher's (2001) theory of relational practice and consider my leadership practice from this perspective... as I review my actions through the lens of relational practice ...I go on to suggest that awareness of the emotional landscape of interaction is an integral aspect of living systemic thinking (Marshall, 2004). ... I (then) refer to the complexity of communicating on affective, embodied and cognitive levels, and refer to the potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation that this carries. ...

In the third reflection, I develop my ideas about how relationships can influence organisational structures, suggesting in the first instance that relationship can have a direct impact on structure. ... In comparison with eros, which is contained by rules, agape flexes the boundaries of fixed organisational conventions. ...

The potential elasticity of agape is covered in the final iteration, where I link love to submission to the 'other'. ... The relevant point here is that agape allows us to 'lose' our identity in the action ... as demonstrated in the experience of headstand in Chapter Six. ... I begin to appreciate the complexity of this loving practice. Through my reflexive writing I learn about the capacity that agape has for challenging established 'habitus', the generative and degenerative power of relationship in organisational culture and structure, the variety of ways with which individuals construe and construct meaning from conversation, and the value of reducing the boundaries of self to become absorbed in action' (Chapter Eight, pp.255-256).

I reflect on text and the values underlying the text. These reflections are not argued, instead I let them find their own logic. This writing is legitimate within the parameters of the post-modern as described by Lyotard.

'A post-modern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgement, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*' (Lyotard, 1979 p. 81 [*author's italics*]).

As I read I begin to discern the underlying symbolism, as this process continues I begin to feel the physicality of those symbols. The text becomes fuller, more meaningful. The meaning spills into the experiential, and my thoughts echo the sensations in my body and propositional knowledge begins to develop. I give examples of these processes taken from Chapter Six:

'My knowledge and my learning process arise from the raw material of my sensuous body. Speech arises in response to felt shifts in embodiment. I trust the dissonance and resonance of my sensuous knowing.



Writing is subtle work, work that requires me to notice the relation of the mind and body. Because I want this writing to be 'true' in the sense that it is aligned with the way I live in the world, it is a watching, reflexive process. I make sense by allowing myself to be influenced by my reading, by the ideas of others in 'a collective field of reasoning and imagining'. I pull these ideas together and let them influence my thinking' (Chapter six, pp.172-173).

'It is my phenomenological discernment of movement in the inner body, which enables me to discriminate between the feeling and thinking. ... Realising the interrelatedness of these structures, feeling the resonance and dissonance, shows me the gaps in my knowing. It is in the gaps created by dissonance that my knowledge forms and it is the harmony of resonance that indicates the direction of my actions and thoughts' (Chapter Six, p.177).

As I reflect, I ask, 'What meanings does this text evoke?' In my reflection I am not deconstructing individual words but searching for patterns and shapes created by feeling the qualities of the language. I let the language show me its order, those rules that were invented in the process of writing. It is these rules '*that will have been done*' (ibid. p.81, see above). The rules, the ordered patterns of my language, contain the potential to become instruments of love.

I decide on the value and relevance of a philosophical idea by comparing it with my existing knowledge, which becomes part of a change process through which I develop my propositional knowledge. I do not look for universal meanings, and do not seek to finalise my meaning.

In this thesis I allow my scholarship to develop as an ongoing and unplanned process. I point to the philosophers and theorists that have influenced my thinking, and then frame my writing. Then I discern the patterns of my thinking and reflect on the values lying within the writing.

The basic tenet of social construction (Gergen, 2002b) is that language is central to the power relations of the social order, and that language determines the nature of social relations and the nature of knowledge. Social Constructionists maintain that we can only know what we know as a consequence of participating in conversation (see Shotter, J. 1993) and that the 'fundamental circularity of conceptual systems' (Varela et. al. 1991) can be challenged through joint action and conversation with others. I refer to this in Chapter Five:

"The process of giving form to feeling" is how Shotter (Shotter, 1993 p.79) refers to the imaginary (half formed) grounding that people act out in their daily lives, and which is given form to the extent that other people "act back upon that background to give it further form" ... It is from this that Shotter develops the idea of 'root metaphors' that create particular ways of formulating our relationships with the world. That the ways we think and speak, as well as the words that are used, become part of an unacknowledged pattern which is self-perpetuating' (Chapter Five, p.150).

However, this means that we cannot trust language to provide us with the truth.

George Steiner maintains that language deceives when he writes,

'Language can say, "there was no Auschwitz".... On the most intimate levels of love and of friendship, language betrays and betrays itself. How then can it be entrusted with that supreme "underway" towards the truth.... How then can verbal discourse, the speech act, be a legitimate pointer to that which lies beyond it?' (Steiner, G. 2001, p. 167)

In his book Steiner gives a series of connected inquiries and responses and in so doing elucidates the grammars of creation that are embedded in language, which is itself embedded in the culture and history of the western cannon.

My language becomes a link between my values and my action and I reflect on my texts to develop my understanding of how I might bring love more fully into action. I use language, and interpret its meanings, taking into account the power of the social order (my leadership role), the underlying symbolism (my ontological awareness), and the feelings the words evoke (my embodied knowing) to create new meaning. I call this recognising 'the ordering principles of language', which arise out of a particular emotional and embodied experience and are formed within a particular cultural frame.

I glimpse these ordering principles through my reflective process, and integrate them into my research method. I do not take these ordering principles as fixed, but as a tool in my developing inquiry.

## APPYLING THE ORDERING PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE

*Below is a piece of reflective writing, written with a sense of longing for love, holding the question, 'What does love at work show me? This example demonstrates how my reflective writing is produced through a theoretical frame, and how I use the ordering principles of language to develop my understanding of the transformational nature of love.*

As I write I hold the sensed memory of love in my mind and re-experience aspects of the way that I see love has worked in my life. What I am doing is remembering in order to reconfigure how I see the world now. Expressing myself in this way, I can see that I have written through a frame of feminist post-structural theory. I reframe meaning, by glimpsing the direction that love might be taking me and by reflecting on its underlying logic.

The writing has been numbered for ease of reference.

### REFLECTIVE WRITING

#### LOVE'S LOGIC

1. I describe my learning of love's meanings as a series of steps surrounding events. I reflect on what these events tell me about how to improve what I am doing. I describe these events, but it is never enough. Love seems to escape each time.
2. It starts with a lack or a loss of love. Feeling this lack is debilitating and enfeebling, it makes me feel weak, powerless and unable to move.
3. Feminism provides explanations, and in the companionship of others who share similar experiences I start to develop a sense of personhood.
4. Being taught meditation, I have an experience of divine love. My teacher is someone who has never met me before.
5. Now I find that it is not necessary to voice my anger about loss of love and over time my family remark upon it.

6. As a leader I notice the resistance of others to my idealisation of strategic goals. I wonder how they might come to share my vision. I realise that some do not understand because they do not recognise meaning in what I say. I realise that there are many reasons for this.
7. I have been empowered by my leadership position to impose my meaning. I begin to understand the abusive power of eroticism. I think about how I might rephrase my meanings, sometimes this is manipulative and / or coercive. I feel the lack of love in me. No one recognises this lack.
8. As my angry passions fade, I ask 'What makes people co-operate at work?'
9. When someone I do not like very much 'makes up' with a woman who 'did the dirty' on him in an office row I am curious to find out what logic brought him to act in that way. I am privileged and humbled to learn the logic of his magnanimity.
10. I become a chronicler of team and interdepartmental behaviour and begin to think that the first law of thermodynamics applies to emotion in organisation, that emotion can neither be created nor destroyed; it just keeps being recycled around.
11. I decide that the role of the leader is to shift the negative into the positive wherever possible, and then to recognise when the passion needs to run its course.
12. Abuse and cruelty, victimhood and passive aggression, we all suffer from it.
13. Passion becomes compassion. We all suffer. We all lack recognition.
14. What I know and cannot say now compounds my sense of lack. There is no one now who can speak, be a witness to my experience. I do not understand the logic of love any more.

15. The more I notice what is happening, the more dispassionate I become. Am I losing the capacity to love? What is my lesson here? I have lack, dispassion, unpredictability, and learning. It is not fair; I ought to feel happier. Love is not fair. Love does not possess my logic; it has its own quality. I know this with my head, and I do not feel love's presence. It hurts.
16. Cognition ends in silence, how do I reach beyond these words, beyond this yawning sense of loss, how can this emptiness be filled?
17. Love's logic goes beyond words, but still I am not silent. I cannot go beyond love, I cannot deny the power of love, and I cannot win it for myself. Love's logic goes beyond rationality.

### **Showing the ordering principles of language**

This writing is an example of thought being influenced by feeling. It is a potted history of my search to live love more fully. It traces snapshots of my life journey from identity crises in (2) to feelings of dispassion in (15). Following Ruddick's exemplar of 'feeling crying out for thought' I write 'through' love, holding an embodied sense of what love means to me, and letting this sense direct my reminiscences.

I remember a sense of liberation in terms of feminist theory paragraph (3), and refer to the structures of power in organisation in (6) and (7). I write about love as erotic energy, and link this with potential abuse of power in (7).

Feeling thought, the sisterly bonds between women, the capacity of social structures to create subjects and order perception, these three gendered theoretical frames enable me to express what I know in this reflective writing.

Passion subsides as I ask questions about co-operation and relationship in the office (8) and (9). I begin to recognise the powerful effect of emotion in organisation and link this into the responsibilities of leadership (10), (11) and (12) to use organisational power wisely. Love's logic takes me to a new respect for relationship. I notice how another person 'forgives' his office enemy in circumstances where I would have found it impossible (9). And I recognise this as an example of 'love at work'.

I see how passion leads me to universalise experience, and that relationship requires me to 'stand in another's shoes'. I want to learn how I might do this, and begin writing action accounts. I use the text as a signpost, to understand the dynamics of relationship. I am familiar with post-modern theories of language, and I try to discern meaning (and right from wrong) in local, particular, circumstances.

Continuing to think 'through' love, I remain unsatisfied and complain about not getting love to do what I want. Other people's theories do not inform me.

Seeing this, I can point to a logic of love that lies beyond what I know now, that is mysterious, that I cannot put into words, that I must strive to accept.

My reflective writing shows me that love might have helped me to regain my personhood, but now requires me to follow its own logic and not my own, that my task is to develop the art of love.

I turn to 'silence' and spiritual practice for more answers.

## RELIGIOUS CONSTRUCTIONS OF SELF

*In this section I look at the relation of western philosophy and western religious practice with eastern philosophy and spiritual practice. I consider the differences between Christian, Jewish and Hindu practice, referring to Bernstein's theory (Bernstein, 2000) and reflect on how this structures my learning and knowledge production. I do this firstly, to explain more clearly how I come to learn which inevitably influences the way that I inquire, and secondly, to lay the groundwork for a later discussion of Rayner's theory of the Complex Self.*

Employing feminist theory, I can see how social practices might structure individual behaviour and meaning making, but how do religious or spiritual practices influence the way I learn?

I distinguish between religious practices, not in order to define or discover a transcendent theology (or universal practice), but to suggest how the relation of theory, practice and experience might structure individual ontology in a similar way that Althusser suggests that social practice influences and creates individual subjects.

Tarnas identifies Kantian theory and the Enlightenment, as the point in history when metaphysics and God were no longer considered the subject of philosophy but of theology (Tarnas, 1991 p. 354). However, Bernstein (Bernstein, 2000 p. 85) suggests there was an earlier moment in history when Christianity began to communicate the good news of Christ through a complete and perfect text, where the language of the text had to be interpreted in order to make God's message understood. It was the text that contained God.

Bernstein contrasts this with Judaism where he maintains that the text is considered to be incomplete and open to revision in the light of experience, because God is not solely in the text but also in action.

He suggests that the consequence of these differently-mediated relations with God is in the nature of inwardness, and that this difference has an effect on the way that the knower relates to the known. In Christianity there is an imperfect society with a complete and perfect text where God is found through analysis of

language. In Judaism there is a perfect society living in the faith of God with an incomplete text.

By making these comparisons, what Bernstein is suggesting is that the relation of language and action mediates the relation of the knower to the known, and therefore that religious practice influences the way we come to know ourselves. In the one case the universalising of the text describes a model of perfection through which the subject is disciplined, and the nature of the divine is understood through language, which he maintains, encourages an outward focus. In the alternative case the subject seeks to understand experientially the 'principles of all things' which encourages an inward focus.

By comparison, in Hinduism inward authority **realises** the text, it does not seek to analyse or complete the text.

The poems of the Upanishads answer questions about the nature of God, about what happens at death, but they do not develop a logic or an argument, they are "something seen" (Easwaran, 1987 p. 14) and the student is expected to 'make their truths an integral part of character, conduct, and consciousness' (ibid. p. 14). These poems give practical clues about how to develop individual consciousness, clues that must be grasped intuitively, rather than understood and rationalised.

Through the practice of concentration the ancient Hindu sages discovered that, 'they could separate strata of the mind and observe its workings as objectively as a botanist observes a flower (ibid. p. 17). This did not involve thinking or interpreting, but rather discrimination, observation, and seeing. Hindu religious practice is focused on developing the skills of observation and does not give authority to the text. These discriminative practices ultimately focus on union with the divine<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Yoga is a general term that refers to the 'union of body, mind and soul, and with God' (Iyengar, 1993 p. xvii). Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga start with understanding ethics (1<sup>st</sup> Limb), living the 'right' way (2<sup>nd</sup> Limb), control of the body through postures (3<sup>rd</sup> Limb), control of the breath (4<sup>th</sup> limb), control of desire (5<sup>th</sup> Limb), the practice of concentration (6<sup>th</sup> Limb), meditation (7<sup>th</sup> Limb) and Samadhi or union with the divine (8<sup>th</sup> Limb). This is covered more fully in Chapter Six.



## Summary

I suggest that religious practices structure learning in a variety of ways, and that these learning methods privilege particular ways of coming to know. This is reflected, not only in cultural differences, but also in different ways of 'being' and different cultural constructions of self.

I compare knowledge developed (1) through analysis of text, (2) through a combination of text and experience, and (3) through direct realisation of the text. I suggest that particular religious and spiritual practices shape individual perception by focussing on different aspects of the mind / body relation and that these learning capacities frame our cultural constructions of the world.

When I refer to 'reflecting on my accounts using the ordering principles of language to develop propositional knowledge', I am not only referring to a post-modern textual analysis, I am also referring to my attempt to 'realise' my text. I am asking my text to disclose its direction. This realising process, learned through spiritual practice and applied to my reflective writing, is described in Chapter Six in this way:

'The 3<sup>rd</sup> Limb is *asana*, learning control of the body through postures. 'Learning control' is a critical phrase. It does not mean the brain instructing the body, verbally saying 'do this, do that' and the body obeying. It means letting the body show me what it can do. ... I learned control of the body, to work with the body so that it became free to move into the posture that it 'knew' how to do anyway! I stopped performing headstand from the 'outside' and learned its real meaning from the 'inside'. In this way the body becomes the instrument of the headstand....

This methodology can be applied to the practise of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Limbs of yoga and is a metaphor for the way I write about love in organisation. Becoming an instrument of love is like becoming an instrument of the body doing headstand. It is not about taking in information and applying it 'out there', neither is it about performance, it is about letting knowledge of love held 'in here' work in its own way' (Chapter Six, p.173).

This example shows how I privilege my experience of the text in order that it may disclose its knowledge.

This is a turning point in the theoretical framing of my inquiry. My way of learning and being in the world has been shaped over the past 20 years by the experience of meditation and yoga, and this has influenced me in very significant ways. These practices have taught me through a process of absorption. It means that my knowledge is disclosed rather than interpreted. The result is that in my reflective writing often appears to have no theoretical frame, and does not point to specifics. These apparent 'assertions' arise from this learning process.

I develop my scholarship by reliving my experience of practice when I read my journal. The propositional knowledge gained by reflecting on practice is developed throughout my inquiry and eventually becomes my 'living educational theory' (Whitehead, 1988). When I bring my lived experience into alignment with the ideas of others, their theory informs and influences my living theory<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> In summary, a living educational theory is 'the living form and content of an educational theory which can generate valid descriptions and explanations for the educational development of individuals' (Whitehead, 1988 p. 42). A full explanation is at the end of this Chapter.

## ONTOLOGY AND THE STRUCTURES OF BEING

*In this section I distinguish between an analytic mode of inquiry and a holistic mode of inquiry. I expand on the way that I use the ordering principles of language as I reflect on my writing and 'disclose' knowledge holistically. I compare Bortroft's (Bortroft, 1996) 'moment of coalescence' with western ideas of unity. I go on to apply this idea of coalescence between the 'belongingness of things' to the internal reordering that occurs in my spiritual practice. I illustrate this with excerpts taken from later Chapters.*

*As in the previous section, this theory later contributes to Rayner's theories of Inclusionality (Rayner, 2004) where the boundaries between 'things' become fluid and knowledge develops.*

### (o)ntology

I write the word (o)ntology to distinguish it from ontology-in-general<sup>5</sup>.

I experience three aspects of my inward embodied knowing, the spiritual, the emotional, and the cognitive. All three (the spiritual, affect and thought) intermingle inwardly with each other in a variety of combinations and are experienced by me as I act within, and am influenced by, wider cultural and social practices.

My inquiry is about how divine love might come through my (o)ntology into my social practice, and my concern is the relation of ontology, to practice and to epistemology; the relation of being, to action, to realising how I know.

My knowledge, expressed in language, reflects the mental frames through which I have been socialised. (I provided an example of this earlier in this Chapter.) It means that my writing is not value free, and is culturally specific. I describe (o)ntological experience in theoretical terms that are framed by the western philosophy set out earlier in this Chapter.

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<sup>5</sup> In doing this, I am following Thayer-Bacon's (2003) lead in the way she distinguishes between Epistemology and (e)pistemology.

My methodology is influenced by my mode of learning developed through spiritual practice, and described in the previous section. The inward relation between my words, affect and the divine is distinguishable, but is also multi-layered and variable. These distinctions are made through a process of 'seeing' that is non-verbal. The question 'How may I become an instrument of love?' involves the realisation of the divine, not through words but through 'seeing'. It is this non-verbal experience that is enacted through language in this inquiry.

I have shown how I let myself be guided by my reflective writing, rather than explaining my experience by pointing to it. Part Two and Part Three of this thesis is written in this disclosing manner, from within, not from the outside. In Part Four I evaluate the truth of my claims to know from the 'outside' by taking the 'data' developed in Part Two and Part Three and judging my inquiry against my own standards<sup>6</sup>.

I write with feeling following Spinoza (Damasio, 2003), write sensuously following Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), make a case for the universality of human characteristics following Varela, Thompson and Roche (Varela et.al, 1991). I write holistically and reflectively without knowing what new learning will arise. To do this, I deliberately relax the boundaries between self and other, and learn through discrimination rather by analysis. Now I have moved my ideas on from feminist theory of learning through mutuality, and now my perspective is ungendered. I am developing a living theory (and my epistemology) from the facts of my existence, and by allowing these facts<sup>7</sup> to relate (belong) together, waiting to see if a 'moment of coalescence' arises, if I can 'realise' my meaning. When I refer to synaesthesia in Chapter Five this is an embodiment of this coalescence, here I wrote:

'My mind prevents sensuous knowing by keeping perception on the surface of the skin. If I bypass the mind I can achieve unity through the senses.... Provided that the mind is not directly involved in framing the perception then new sensory experiences may bring the opportunity of freshness to the mind' (Chapter Five, p.131).

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<sup>6</sup> These standards are developed and set out in Chapter Four.

<sup>7</sup> Here I have turned the meaning of the word 'fact' entirely on its head. These facts are not scientifically or rationally verifiable. I am not analysing my experience by making external comparisons, but rather seeing the intensive depth of my ontological experience and disclosing the facts of my being.

And I use a quote from Jim Dodge to illustrate this point again in Chapter Eight:

'Another artistic peak is the mysterious point where you amass enough momentum that you stop telling the story and the story begins telling you. ...what the Muses seem to favour for getting out of your mind is a concentration so ferocious and total that you seem to disappear' (Dodge 2004, page 31, quoted in Chapter Eight, p.253).

Bortroft provides a theoretical basis for this, when he writes:

'the act of understanding is not an act of reasoning ... Logic is analytical whereas meaning is evidently holistic... We understand meaning in the moment of coalescence when the whole is reflected in the parts so that together they disclose the whole. It is because meaning is encountered in this "circle" of the reciprocal relationship of the whole and the parts that we call it the hermeneutic circle' (Bortroft, 1996, pp.8-9).

It is in the 'moment of coalescence' that I see both myself and the contextual nature of my action. I realise the lotus mandala in this way where the 'whole' becomes disclosed in 'the part'. This 'disclosure' is what I am referring to when I write my critique of staged developmental models of learning in Chapter Five:

'The point is that the metaphor of the many petalled lotus flower and the symbols of the Christian mandala enable another way of coming to know the self. These are not reliant on the integrative capacity of cognition to develop a wider consciousness. Instead this knowledge arises through experiential knowing, which still enables the physical, emotional and mental aspects of self to come to know themselves but through vision-logic rather than intellect' (Chapter Five, p.164).

This moment of coalescence is a moment of synthesis when (o)ntology 'belongs together' with (e)pistemology, where the two are not separate components that have a connection with each other but are experienced simultaneously in what Bortroft refers to as '*dynamical simultaneity*' (ibid. p. 64 [*author's italics*]). This dynamical relationship is not the resolution of the final stage of dialectical reasoning following Hegel, but a realisation that the inherent qualities of beingness are dynamically related to the inherent qualities of knowingness. What Bortroft calls, 'unity without unification' (ibid. p. 60) in his discussion of Goethe's

scientific consciousness. This is how I come to understand 'wholeness' as discussed in Bortoft and also in Bohm's discussion of the implicate and explicate order (Bohm, 1996).

Here I see a relation between the Hegelian search for unity and the phenomenologists' search for wholeness. And I see a relation between Griffin's rejection of Kantian ethics, which is analytical, and his privileging joint- action-in the moment. The former is a product of analysis; the latter is the result of the disclosure of experience. I see that these have a relation in the (e)pistemological and (o)ntological<sup>8</sup> of what it means to be human.

In my meaning making I bring the 'belonging' relatedness of (o)ntology and (e)pistemology together with the organising principles of language when I reflect on my free fall writing and my accounts of action.

I think that there is no special reason why language should structure perception because it is the ontological structures of being in a dynamical relation with each other that also determine how I make sense of what I see.

### **The dynamical inner relation and consciousness**

Bortoft suggests that there are two different modes of consciousness underpinning relational processes. He maintains that the analytic mode of consciousness 'transfer(s) attention from the sensory experience to the mental abstraction', whereas the holistic mode of consciousness withdraws attention from thought and from the psychological structures that organise experience, reinvests attention in sensory experience and reverses the normal learning sequence (Bortoft, 1996, p.65).

Modes of consciousness are also referred to in Bernstein's typology (Bernstein, 2000) as the modality of the pedagogic code through which the pedagogic device

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<sup>8</sup> I refer to epistemology in the terms favoured by Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon (Thayer-Bacon, 2003) to indicate that I do not refer to modernist or postmodernist readings of ontology, that I am not seeking to universalise my understanding of either ontology or epistemology.

is contextualised. Consciousness<sup>9</sup> is the field within which this pedagogy is produced, reproduced and changed.

I use the word 'consciousness' in the Hindu sense, meaning that which is in the belongingness of things. I am not referring to consciousness in the phenomenological sense quoted, in Ladkin as being, 'always directed, ... always consciousness of' (Ladkin, 2005 p.111 [*author's italics*]).

When I refer to modes of consciousness I am writing about the stuff of relating, the stuff of belongingness of phenomena, not an analysis of what one phenomenon means to another. So it is my mode of consciousness that disciplines and determines my perception and I learn about this in spiritual practice.

Because my experience tells me that love is the mode that opens up belongingness, I aim to bring this into my professional practice by deliberately changing my mode of consciousness from analytic to holistic mode when I reflect upon my work in Part Three.

The relation between thought, affect and the divine is distinguishable, multi-layered and variable. I suggest that these distinctions are made through a process of 'seeing' that is non-verbal.' Words, affect and the divine are the 'facts' of my (o)ntology and my mode of consciousness brings these 'facts' into a discriminating relation with each other. I refer to this process in Chapter Five:

'The relation between thinking and feeling becomes clearer to me as I meditate. In meditation I say the *mantra*. This is a Sanskrit word whose meaning is irrelevant, but whose resonance is chosen by the *guru* to awaken the soul within. It is a sacred word that the student is asked never to repeat to anyone. This is because it is in such close alignment with the soul within. The *mantra* is the anchor

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<sup>9</sup> In the London Review of Books, 18 August 2005 pp. 19-21, Ian Hacking's review of Stephen Rose's latest book on the brain makes distinctions between a Lockean perspective of consciousness formulated as an alternative to Decarte's *cognito* in defining personal identity, 'being conscious' as in David Lodge's novel as being aware of who one is, one's past and hopes for the future, and Damasio's feeling as a consciousness that is capable of modifying the brain. Bernstein also uses the word consciousness to denote 'that which is noticed' in relation to the social activity. I am distinguishing here between consciousness of – the direction of attention, and being conscious - as in being aware of, encompassing some sense of feeling and/or movement. I want to acknowledge the difference between the analytic and disclosing modes of consciousness, which are not seen as either incompatible or separate in an inclusional approach.

around which I watch the action of my mind as it generates thoughts and feelings. I discover that if I repeat the *mantra* with desire, perhaps hunger, then thoughts of food arise. On the other hand if I repeat the *mantra* lovingly then peace may arise' (Chapter Five, p.137).

I can 'see' how thought and emotion *belong* together, how divine love and emotional loves, *belong* together, how sensation in the body *belongs* with thought. This realising of the relation of emotion, thought and action is one of the processes that occurs in meditation.



## INCLUSIONAL SPACE AND THE COMPLEX SELF

### Inclusional space

In Bortroft's 'moment of coalescence' there is a fusion of being and knowing that produces the gestalt, the 'Aha, now I see' realising experience. Something appears where there had been a 'nothingness'. When we see the part and seek to see the as yet undisclosed this is an 'active absence' (Bortroft 1996, p.15). Bernstein identifies no-thing as a gap between the known and the unknown, and calls it a 'potential discursive gap' (Bernstein, 2000 p.30). The space between knowing and not-knowing, like the gap between thinking and doing, is an absence of spatial relation between either mental or physical objects, and where a relation is sought.

I first refer to a gap between knowing and not-knowing in Chapter Five, between feeling and thinking:

'As a child, I lived in a world where emotions were often dishonestly ascribed and I created coherence by looking for the gap between word and feeling. I had an awareness that meanings and words were constantly changing, and that my words must represent that which had already occurred inside me' (Chapter Five, p.128).

Mathematics always assumes a spatial dimension, that neither wholeness nor nothing is actually attainable. Inclusionality maintains that because this mathematical convention does not mirror our sensuous experience of movement or communication it encourages an overlay of impositional logic on experience.

An inclusional mathematical formulation is ternary, where numbers cease to be fixed single points but are expressed in triplets so that '3' is expressed as '2,3,4' and the number system becomes fluid and reciprocal when '3' is represented by the relation of '2' and '4' (Rayner 2004). Combining this fluid number system with Mandelbrot's series of complex numbers that occur between points within complex boundaries, inclusionality thinks of objects or entities, as never fixed and being constantly revised by the flow of the space between them. For this dynamic movement to occur the boundaries between points, and the boundaries between entities, must also constantly change. These dissolving and dynamic

boundaries form, and are reformed, in such a way that both entities and the space between them become infused with the others qualities.

Rayner (2004b) puts it this way, ‘..the conventional abstract mathematical representation of such complexity *begins* prescriptively with an explicit or implicit *definition* of content and container that replaces their *simultaneous* reciprocal relationship with *sequential* ‘feedback’, the natural might be said to *originate* in *indefinition* – a realm of endless possibility’ (ibid. p. 14). Rayner sees the movement of the boundaries between entities influencing the entities and the boundaries in an indeterminate free-flow form, which is a process of ‘contextual transformation’.

This concept of boundary has echoes of Bernstein’s descriptions of pedagogic communication, where he highlights the importance of the thickness (or the insulation) of linguistically defined boundaries. For example the boundaries between teaching French and German defines the discourse of language teaching in schools, and we come to understand the teaching of Arts subjects in relation to the teaching of Science subjects (Bernstein 2000, p.6). Bernstein sees the preservation of the insulation of boundaries as the action of power, which is disguised, cloaked by silence and preserved because the boundaries are classified as ‘natural’.

In an inclusional, more experiential reading, of boundary, Rayner suggests that not only the outer, but also the inner, layers of the insulation exert influence on space. This introduces a multi-dimensional reading of the ‘dynamic of mutuality’ (Macy, 1991) where points / objects / entities become complex but distinct spaces bounded by flow, ‘communicating between reciprocally coupled *insides* and *outsides* through *intermediary* spatial domains’ (Rayner 2004b).

This is the logic of inclusionality, where points / objects / entities are ‘distinct places’ influencing, and being influenced by, contextual space or flow in a reciprocal dynamic. The way in which the boundaries and movement (or the belongingness) between ‘distinct places’ and ‘contextual space’ are perceived is the critical aspect of inclusional logic and differentiates it from other theories.

Rayner (2004b) suggests that ‘with “zero” representing “absence” and “infinity” representing “limitless amount”, it would make sense contextually to regard zero

as “inner-outer balance” [a] (stationary boundary condition) and infinity as inner outer spatial possibility... all under one another’s mutual influence. ... So by focussing on boundary properties at a particular scale it may be possible to gain insight into processes operating simultaneously at any larger or smaller scale. In this way the microcosm expresses the macrocosm and *vice versa* – the small picture can reflect the big picture ’ (ibid. p. 12).

Bernstein suggests that ‘attempts to change degrees of insulation reveal the power relations’ (Bernstein 2000, p. 7). Taking this into inclusional logic, I suggest that the degree of influence of ‘distinct places’ and ‘contextual space’ is determined by the degree of insulation of the perceived boundaries between them. Where I write about my personal experience, I am reducing the insulation between my inner boundaries:

‘Changing the self is analogous to the body becoming like a mountain or the synaesthesia of making music or dissolving into the sense of the sublime. From that space I am in love with the whole world and the world loves me. I am the world’ (Chapter Eight, p.252).

In Chapter One, where I write about clarifying meanings of love I am acknowledging the changing social construction of love.

In Chapter Ten I give an example of Scharmer’s ‘presencing’ influencing a conversation in organisation, and conclude that this form of communication breaks down the insulating thickness of conventional boundaries:

“Presencing” the future is enabled through shifting the locus of listening through four different perspectives, and understanding the nature of language through a similar number of frames, which are: talking from politeness, through debate, through inquiry, and on to flow. These listening conversations recontextualise organisational discourse through a pedagogic transmission that deliberately employs sense-making and ethical modalities, outside the usual conventions and organisational norms’ (Chapter Ten, page...)

In microcosm in my (o)ntology, I see Rayner’s stationary boundary condition internally as an absence of movement akin to silence. In macrocosm, in relations with others, I see potential in relationship as the place of possibility, belonging

together within contextual space, at the same time influencing the flow of both inner as well as outer domains.

At the interface of content (distinct places) where it has been dislocated from context (contextual space) the inner / outer boundary, using impositional logic, becomes a site of change (and power) through which the dynamic relation can be perceived and sensed.

Rayner goes on to say that if change is seen as the transformation of space, either as a distinct space or as contextual space, then there will be a '*simultaneous* alteration in both content and context in their reciprocal relationship. And this reciprocal alteration, where content and context co-creatively shape one another can be thought of as *attunement* or *resonance*, rather than adaptation' (Rayner 2004b p. 19).

Bringing my experience into propositional knowledge I describe the movement across boundaries (whether these are the inner boundaries of my (o)ntology or the outward boundaries between people or ideas) using the language and reasoning of inclusionality. I sense the dynamic movement within and between boundaries through resonance and dissonance. The more insulation there is, the less resonance, the less attunement, the less influence is possible. In this situation, the more capacity that the contextual field has to pick up and echo these 'local resonances', the more fluid the inclusional dynamic is likely to be.

Now, I make further connections between inclusionality and Bernstein's theories of pedagogy.

Bernstein has formulated recontextualising rules which 'regulate the formation of pedagogic discourse' (Bernstein 2000, p. 114). He says 'The recontextualising principle selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order... Formally, we move from a recontextualising principle to a recontextualising field with agents with practising ideologies (ibid. p. 33). Bernstein places the recontextualising field between the production of new knowledge and the transformation of pedagogic discourse in schools. Recontextualising involves the de-location of part of a discourse and its relocation in the field of production (ibid. p. 113).

However, I am using 'recontextualise' as an inclusional term. To recontextualise means locating a discourse of love, and bringing the resonances of love into the inclusional flow, not as a way of imposing a power relation, but as a way of infusing the inclusional space with loving resonances.

I am suggesting that this loving resonance can be recognised by a felt sense of wholeness. This sense is transitory, a moment of coalescence arising from the 'dynamical simultaneity' of the boundaries.

### **The Complex Self**

Rayner describes the Complex Self also as a 'distinct place', as a malleable local identity. The 'self' is 'a complex, dynamic coming together of inner and outer through intermediary aspects... Each aspect simultaneously shapes the other' (Rayner 2004c)

Inclusional space is the ground from which the belongingness of my (o)ntology and my (e)pistemology arise. These are not fixed entities. They are intimately and dynamically related in the formation of my self, and they contribute to and are shaped by my mode of consciousness. Within this inclusional frame it becomes obvious that changing the shape of the body changes the shape of the mind, and that inhalation and exhalation are intimately connected to my sensed memory of eros and agape.

Silence is the 'stationary boundary position', an active absence, and it reorders my primary experience. Here the (o)ntological structures of self shape, and are shaped by, the fluidity of the inclusional space. This is the space in which the relational belonging of words / affect / divine are realised.

This silence is not the absolute of God in the text, or God in practice, or the God of principles. It is itself, I believe, a universal human capacity, in which it is possible to realise my individual and unique experience of God's loving presence.

## **BERNSTEIN'S THEORIES OF PEDAGOGY**

Basil Bernstein (Bernstein, 2000) developed a very comprehensive (and complex) theory of pedagogic communication over a period of 40 years. Much of his early work was controversial because of the claims he made about the difference that language skills made in the education of working class and middle class children, and this may have limited his influence in the field of education. He ended his career as Emeritus Professor of the Sociology of Education at the University of London.

My interest is in the work he did on symbolic control and psychic ordering, although he was as much concerned with institutional power and control.

### **Defining pedagogy**

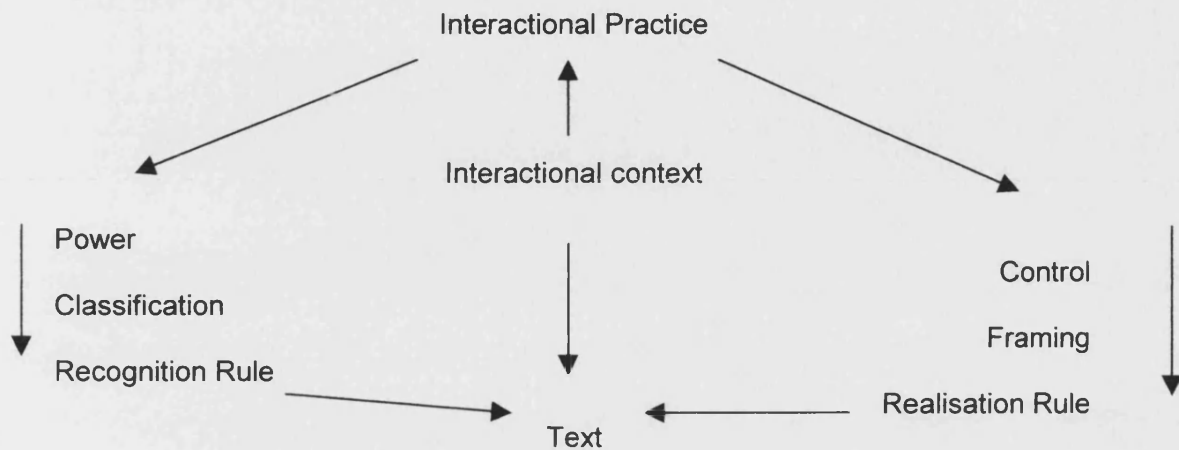
He defines pedagogy as: 'a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider or evaluator' (ibid. p. 78).

He goes on to distinguish between institutional pedagogy, that will have accredited providers – like a school or church – and segmental pedagogy which happens in everyday practice and is informal – like learning life skills in a parent / child relationship (ibid. p. 78).

And he defines three types of pedagogic relation: explicit, implicit and tacit. 'Explicit and implicit refer to progressive in time pedagogic relation where there is a purposeful intention to initiate, modify, develop or change knowledge, conduct or practice' (ibid. p. 199). 'In the case of explicit pedagogy the intention is highly visible, whereas in the case of implicit pedagogy the intention from the point of view of the acquirer is invisible. The tacit is a pedagogic relation where initiation, modification, development or change of knowledge or practice occurs, where neither of the members may be aware of it. Here the meanings are non-linguistic, condensed and context dependant' (ibid. p. 200).

**Pedagogic relations shaping pedagogic communications.**

Bernstein describes the transmission of **pedagogic communication** using the following diagram:



The transmission context: (Bernstein, 2000 p. 16)

- Power is the relation between boundaries and between categories.
- Classification is the degree of insulation between boundaries. If the degree of insulation between boundaries changes then the classification changes.
- The Recognition Rule regulates meanings that are relevant (ibid. p.18), is regulated by the classificatory principle and refers to power relations (ibid. p.17)
- Control carries the boundaries between categories
- Framing controls the means of acquiring the legitimate message, how meanings are put together (ibid. p.12) and regulates relations within a context.
- The Realisation Rule determines how we put meanings together and how we make them public
- A legitimate text is anything that attracts evaluation, which can be no more than a slight movement (ibid. p.18)
- Interaction: the selection, organisation sequencing criteria and pacing of communication (oral, visual and written) together with position, posture and dress of communicants (ibid. p.190). (Definition given in relation to framing and locus of control).

Changes in classification and framing will produce different modalities of elaborated codes. Elaborated codes are codes of transmission that that construct ideology, a way of making relations (ibid. p.15).

Now I turn to Bernstein's theory, and transpose some of his concepts to describe the rhizomatic nature of love.

- **Power:** the relation of boundaries within the inclusional flow. I refer to power in two ways. Firstly, referring to the inner boundaries of lived experience that provides experience of personal empowerment, and secondly referring to social categories and their relation to the social context that is the more conventional reading of power that Bernstein also uses.
- **Classification:** the thickness or degree of insulation of the boundary between entities and distinct places, which will lead to changes in joint understanding.
- **The Recognition Rule:** regulates relevant meanings. Leaders with hierarchical power have formal opportunities to regulate meaning through the conduct of meetings and production of written material.
- **Control:** the inclusional flow underlying formally recognised organisational stratification.
- **Framing:** the qualities and modes of relating between people sharing joint tasks.
- **The Realisation Rule:** The effect of the inclusional flow on relations between people, akin to organisational culture. I want to see love integrated within the Realisation Rule, as a determiner of how we put meanings together, as an implicit ingredient of Interactional Practice.
- **Legitimate text:** A practice, behaviour or writing that can be judged in terms of social convention or aspiration. This includes social rules that are articulated, such as organisation policies and prescribed methods of teaching yoga
- **Interactional Practice:** the relationship of a person to other persons or to identifiable practices. In inclusional terms, it is the relation of 'distinct places' to other 'distinct places'.
- **Interactional context:** The inclusional flow, which takes into account the entire practical, symbolic and tacit aspects of internal organisational vision and behaviours, and including inter-organisational influences.



In a tacit pedagogic relation, the parties in relation are not explicitly aware of pedagogic transmission. Although this may be materialised later through joint action in what Bernstein calls the pedagogic device.

The pedagogic device is the term Bernstein uses to refer to the materialisation of symbolic control which regulates pedagogic communication and 'acts selectively on meaning potential' (ibid. p. 28). This is particularly relevant in my later discussions of tacit pedagogy.

### **Gaps in meaning**

Bernstein suggests that meaning making takes place within a context, but that if the meaning is fully embedded then it is 'unthinkable knowledge'. In other words, there needs to be differentiation and an 'indirect relation between meanings and a specific material base'. He goes on to say, 'that (if) meanings (that) are context bound (they) cannot unite with anything other than themselves. They lack the power of relation outside a context because they are totally consumed by that context' (ibid. p. 30).

Meaning-making therefore must include the potential of a gap, which he calls 'the potential discursive gap'. He emphasises, 'It is not a dislocation of meaning, it is a gap.' (ibid. p. 30). It is in this gap that different relations and different meanings arise.

This 'gap' is critical to my inquiry. I develop this concept later in the thesis and refer to it as the 'inclusional space'. In Bernstein's typology, the gap is two-dimensional whereas in Rayner (2004b) not only does the gap exist between two or more meanings and their material base, but is itself influenced by meaning and materiality in a multi-dimensional state of dynamism.

### **The recontextualising field**

The pedagogic discourse is a principle for the circulation and reordering of discourses. Bernstein's recontextualising principle 'selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order'

(Bernstein, 2000 p.33). This then creates recontextualising fields, which then creates agents with recontextualising functions.

A multi-dimensional dynamic is critical to the concept of recontextualising. In a similar way that language only has meaning within context, as discussed earlier in this Chapter, so recontextualisation occurs through the dynamic inter-relation of boundaries. Taking Rayner's inclusional processes with Bernstein's theory of recontextualisation, at the end of Chapter Nine I begin to draw out my findings:

'My methodology has enabled me to develop the relation between the 'I' that acts in the world; and the 'eye' of consciousness, the observer of the inner world. My mind looks both ways, there is the self that has been constructed by living in a participative world and the self whose soul feels almost as old as the hills.

My inquiry brings my knowledge of love into the academy through propositional knowing and into my practice through the dynamical boundaries between self and other. The boundary between 'me and we' is the pivotal place where resonances and dissonances are both felt and dispersed into the relational flow. If I feel and act with love, this understanding leaks through the boundary of the self into the inclusional flow, and is returned to me. In the resonance of the return, my understanding of love is clarified.

Here, in the pivotal place between boundaries, I see eros thickening the insulation of the boundary and exercising power in the way that structures organisational culture, and I see agape reducing the insulation of the boundary' (Chapter Nine, page 259)

Then as I begin to consider the criteria against which to judge my inquiry, I bring Rayner's and Bernstein's concept into the first standard that I use to measure the value of my inquiry and my practice, which is:

- my capacity to reframe or recontextualise what I am, or we are doing now

## **FROM PROPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE TO LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY**

Whitehead argues 'that the propositional form is masking the living form and content of an educational theory which can generate valid descriptions and explanations for the educational development of individuals' (Whitehead, 1988).

In this chapter I have shown how theory informs my writing. I have demonstrated this with an example, which shows the relation of theory to my expression of love through reflective writing. By writing with love through the frame of theory I develop connections between theory and practice. By the end of my inquiry this has become my living educational theory.

## **PART ONE: THEORY**

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **ACTION RESEARCH MODELS AND METHOD**

*In this chapter I show how my methodology connects with the action research models of Reason (Reason and Bradbury 2001), Heron (Heron 1996), Marshall (Marshall, 2004) and Whitehead (Whitehead 1988).*

*I provide a case example that shows how my inquiry combines first person action research methods with spiritual practice.*

#### **HOW IS THIS INQUIRY AND HOW IS THIS ACTION RESEARCH?**

This is a first person inquiry that combines spiritual practice and action research methods.

I am inquiring into my values and the phenomenological meaning of love by considering what happens beneath practice because I want love to influence my practice more fully.

My writing becomes my inquiry and a demonstration of my learning as I reflect on how love can be seen in my practice.

This is an emergent process. Others have been involved, as co-inquirers in peer supervision, as commentators on the text, with participants in conversations, as part of an Inquiry Group. There is only one author, but I will show that many people have influenced my thinking and many ideas have influenced my text.

My inquiring is part of a process that contributes to a participatory worldview:

- 1) My primary purpose is practical, I want to bring love more fully into what I do.

- 2) I am continually inquiring into meaning and purpose, through meditating on a daily basis, and through practising yoga postures. I pay disciplined attention in a review of actions at the end of each day. I journal stories about my practice. I discipline my appetites, and keep an alignment with my bodily knowing. I do this everyday in an iterative and persistent way.
- 3) In the extended epistemology of Reason and Heron, I use different forms of knowing, representing experiential knowing through drawing, photos, journalling, poetry and video. In Torbert's four territories of experience I am concerned with the first territory, visioning and enactment of that vision.
- 4) I am focused on the relational (the criteria against which I ask my work to be judged are relational), and am concerned with reframing what we do together, with bringing a sense of harmony into participatory practice, with supporting relational and inclusive decision making within organisations.
- 5) I contribute to our joint understanding of a shared reality through living more lovingly, and I show how I bring this into practice through a pedagogy of presence.

Throughout the writing I use the methodological form that Jack Whitehead uses for self-study (Whitehead, 1988).

- i) I experience concern because I feel my values are negated (love is hidden, it feels uncomfortable)
- ii) I imagine a solution – I think where is this discomfort coming from, how do I explain it, how does this alter my action
- iii) I act in the direction of this solution in the act of writing from my bodily knowing
- iv) I evaluate the outcome, in this case my felt experience, the resonance of my response.
- v) I modify my actions and sometimes the meaning of my values in the sense memory that I hold in my body.

Love is both the landscape into which I inquire and a focus that is beyond my horizon.

I have used a wide range of models to inform my thinking, these are:

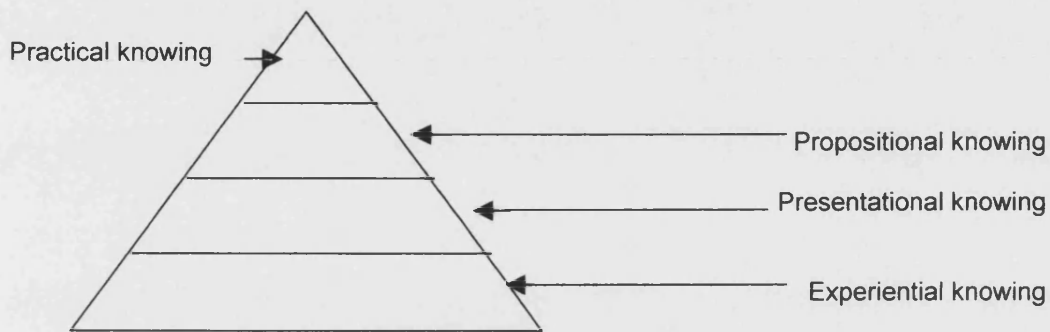
- First, Second and Third person inquiry practices (Reason and Bradbury, 2001)
- Torbert's Four territories of experience and Four parts of speech (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert, 2000)
- Jack Whitehead methodological form for self study (Whitehead, 1988)
- Judi Marshall's work on inner and outer arcs of attention (Marshall, 2001)
- Hindu techniques and models of self, including references to Buddhist practice and a Christian viewpoint (Iyengar, 1966), (Verala,Thompson & Roche, 1991)
- Rayner's work on inclusionality and the Complex Self (Rayner, 2004)

Throughout this process, I have been concerned to keep the sense of love that is felt in the body as my directional guide.

### EXTENDED EPISTEMOLOGY AND CLAIMS TO TRUTH

I develop my propositional knowledge using the extended epistemology of Reason and Heron, where practical knowing is knowing 'how to', propositional knowing is knowing 'about', presentational knowing is knowing in 'imagery and metaphor', and experiential knowing is knowing 'by encounter'

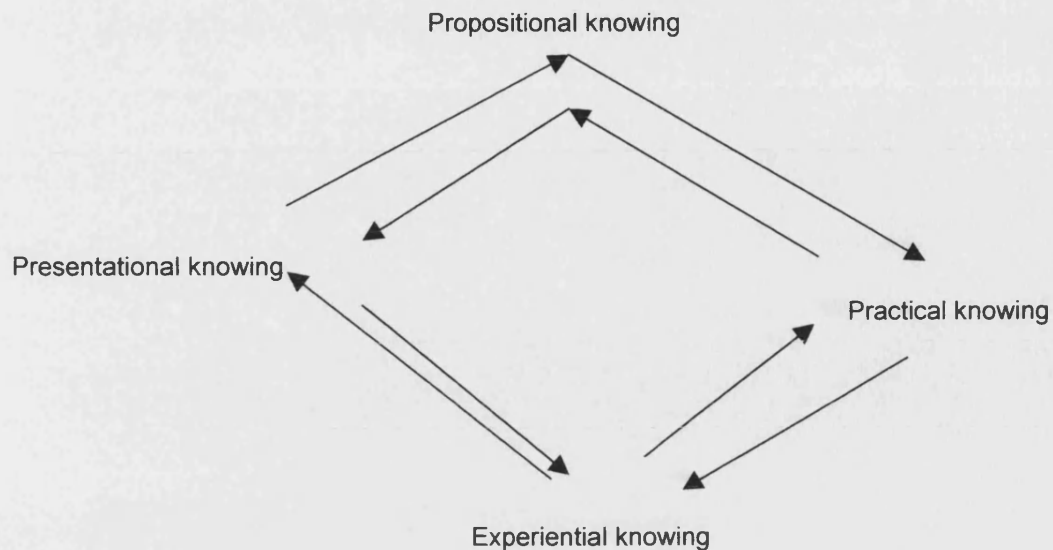
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(Heron, 1996, p.53)

Heron goes on to suggest that any claim to truth must show 'a congruence between the four ways of knowing ... the experiential knowing of what is present, the presentational knowing of imaginal patterns, the propositional knowing of conceptual constructs and the practical knowing of skills and competencies' (ibid. p.164).

I develop my method by combining spiritual practice and first person practice. Using journalled accounts of action to re-immense myself in the experience, I bring it into my action in a series of iterative reflections that incorporate daily spiritual practice. Propositional knowing, that eventually becomes my living educational theory is then developed from this practical knowing. The 'imaginal patterns' of presentational knowing run alongside this in drawing, photos and video work.



**Bi-polar Congruence and the dialectical relation, taken from Heron (ibid. p.57)**

Heron refers to the inner rectangle as 'grounding truth values' and the outer rectangle as 'consummating being-values'.

Heron maintains that this bi-polar congruence shows a dialectical relation between 'being coming into action' and 'knowing the truth in the action'.

I bring 'being' into relation with 'action' as I inquire. I take experiential knowing and situate it in social and participative action, iteratively allowing one process to inform the other. Peter Reason has written, 'Compassionate action is both the purpose and the test of knowing' (Reason, 2000 p.17), and it is this dialogic relation that is at the heart of my inquiry.



## **ACTION RESEARCH MODELS AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES**

Reason makes the distinction between first, second and third person research practices (Reason and Bradbury, 2001 p. xxv), where first person research, 'brings inquiry into more and more moments of action' (ibid. p. xxvi). First person research develops an inquiring attitude, brought to life through values lived through action.

Value-laden first person inquiry is a perspective shared by both action research and by everyday spiritual practice.

Reason suggests that action research can also be seen as, 'not just a form of knowledge creation, but as a spiritual path...' (Reason, 2000 p. 19). However, action research is unlike spiritual practice in that it actively seeks practical outcomes. Spiritual practice on the other hand, seeks to develop an inner knowing, the development of divine consciousness, which might lead to change that, may (but may not), be observable.

Spiritual practice can be practical. St. Ignatius in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and St. Benedict in the 6<sup>th</sup> century are examples of holy men who translated the meaning of the Holy Scriptures into practical exercises and rules for living a good life. These ways of living in God remain alive today in Christian communities of prayer and practise across the world. Faith, discipline and love of and for, God are the components of living a spiritual life. This is similar to the Paths to enlightenment in Hinduism, the Path of Duty and the Path of Love.

Action research provides an evaluative perspective for those practising spiritual disciplines. I would draw similarities with the process that Coghlan (Coghlan, 2005) refers to in relation to Ignatian spirituality and action research. He says,

'For those who live out of a spirituality that might be termed Ignatian, the action research perspective can draw together the processes of Ignatian spirituality into a mode of inquiry-in-action whereby the first person experience of God at work in a person's life, the second person practice of engaging in faith inquiry and working with others to live and act congruently ... may find that they can draw on action research for an articulation of rigour and quality of inquiry that can enrich their practice of Ignatian spirituality' (Coghlan, 2005 p. 104).

Winter (Winter, 2003) makes the distinction between modality of consciousness and practice when he links the Buddhist meditation practice of *metta*, 'loving kindness', to developing positive feelings in the action researcher. Heron also identifies the potential for spiritual practice in developing the skills of action research (Heron, 1996 p. 122).

The skills of reflection are common to both spiritual practice and action research. The difference between them is in the direction of the focus. In action research the focus is on action supported by reflection, and in spiritual practice the focus is on reflection, the truth of which can be supported by action.

## ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHERS

Reason and Bradbury (2001) say that 'first person research practice is best conducted in the company of friends and colleagues who can provide support and challenge' (ibid. p. xxvi). First person inquiry shows its relevance to action, through a dialogic relation with others and / or development of new skills and social practices.

Engagement with others does not necessarily involve formal inquiry groups, provided that the inquirer can show involvement with others in the process of inquiring. (Marshall, 2001) and (Marshall, 2004).

Judi Marshall (Marshall, 2004) shows how she conducts her first person inquiry firstly by situating it in 'living systemic thinking' which she says is 'a form of inquiry, seeking to act with context sensitivity and agency in a multi-dimensional world' (ibid. p.315). She places importance on attentional practices that become clear to her, that arise as a consequence of her inquiring approaches (ibid. p. 323).

By comparison, my sense making arises within a dynamic inclusional field within which the permeable aspects of being influence both thought and action. Similarly to Marshall, my inquiry disciplines includes engagement with others as well as feedback and comments on my writings.

To show how I shape my inquiry, I list the relational aspects of my research process as:

- **Realising the relation of emotion, thought and action in meditation.**  
These are the 'facts' of my ontology that I can 'see' rather than 'know', and that I understand through spiritual practice and that I describe in the language of phenomenology (Bortroft, 1996).
- **Holding the sense of 'the other' as part of the self in the act of writing.**  
This is an extension of Ruddick's (Ruddick, 1989) process of writing through 'feeling' whilst thinking about purpose. This sense of the other permeates all the writing. Sometimes 'the other' is a memory of an event, as described in the Prologue; sometimes it is a sensed memory of love.

- **Immersion in the synaesthetic act of writing.** This is a step on from holding the sense of the other. Here the mental frame becomes subservient to action. In the act of writing it is as if the words write themselves and have a life of their own. This is the submission of will, a collapse of the subjective / objective, of the binary relation, the outcome of which can be perceived by others.
- **Describing experience through theory.** An example of writing in this way is provided in the previous chapter, and is integrated into my methodology in Part Two and Part Three.
- **Framing experience with theory.** This is the basis of my reflective writing, which is described in Chapter Two.
- **Theorising action.** Theorising action occurs at the end of each cycle of my inquiry. It is present in the final paragraphs of the case example given below.
- **Feedback from others in conversation.** I have included accounts of conversation with others involved in first person research, as well as with others with whom I am professionally involved. In the case example given later in this Chapter, I 'process' conflict in an inquiry group through journalling and through conversation.
- **Inquiring with others on the nature of inquiring relationships.** The case example arose in an inquiry group that took place during my research.
- **Research cycling, moving between acting, reflecting, inquiring with others.** This is demonstrated both in the case example in this Chapter, as well as in Chapter Six and in Chapter Eight.
- **Feedback from others in writing.** Examples of this feedback with explanation can be found in the concluding section in this chapter.

## THE DIALOGIC RELATION

As I stand on the edge of the uncomfortable gaps between opposing theories, or between incongruent life experiences, I inquire into the nature of the relation between them. I create new understanding from my accounts of action. It is this dialogic relation that informs my inquiry.

My reflexivity follows the methodological form that Jack Whitehead suggests for living action researchers investigating the question, 'How do I improve my practice?' (Whitehead, 1988) except that here my inquiry is, 'How can I express love through my actions?'

- i) I experience a concern because my (*spiritual*) values are negated
- ii) I imagine a solution
- iii) I act in the direction of this solution
- iv) I evaluate the outcomes of actions
- v) I modify the meaning of my values, problems, ideas and actions in the light of evaluations' (Whitehead, 2004b [*italics insertion are my additions to the text*]).

### Living the inner contradiction

How do I recognise when my values are negated? I recognise this by feeling the discomforted responses of my body<sup>1</sup>.

I decide to critique Torbert's Leadership Development profile not only because it cuts across my views on gender and linear developmental learning models, but also because I feel resistant to it. I want to stop, put my hand up against these ideas like a policeman stopping the traffic. I feel a need to prevent the idea travelling further.

In relation to Griffin's ideas about the emergence of leadership and Complexity Theory, I move with much of the its flow. My mouth is in a subtle 'ooo - this is

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<sup>1</sup> This embodied process is described fully in Chapter Six

nice' shape until I reach his arguments for the similarity of Bohm's Implicate Order and Kantian ideas, then my nose wrinkles and there is a sharp intake of breath. I know that I need to research the discomfort I feel, that I need to understand this discomfort better.

So when I reject this notion or prefer that idea, these are felt experiences. Going through the five stages of the question, 'How can I improve the expression of loving values through my action? My responses to these stages are mirrored inwardly and well as expressed analytically.

This is how I now come to reword the process:

- I experience concern because I feel my values are negated (love is hidden, it feels uncomfortable)
- I imagine a solution – I think where is this discomfort coming from, how do I explain it, how does this alter my action
- I act in the direction of this solution in the act of writing from my bodily knowing
- I evaluate the outcome, in this case my felt experience, the reflexive resonance of my response.
- I modify my actions and sometimes the meaning of my values in the sense memory that I hold in my body.

The movement of the body reflects the movements of consciousness in spiritual practice; the mind moves the body. If thought contradicts speech, it shows in the body. If speech contradicts action, it shows in the body. This is how embodied writing is integrated into my methodology. I attend to these movements, they help me to identify my concern and indicate my direction.

### **Feedback from others in conversation and inquiring with others**

In order to develop my awareness in practice, I reflect on the gaps between my intention and my action. How I do this is shown in the case example below:

### **CASE EXAMPLE ONE: Working with Contradiction in an Inquiry Group**

My first person research included a joint inquiry into the dynamics of group process in a self-facilitated group.

The narrative is in five parts:

- I tell the story through a conversation with one of the participants as we recall the incident and explore our differing perspectives.
- I tell the story from my own point of view. This is written from an embodied and emotional viewpoint, fully immersing myself in the experience.
- I reflect on my earlier conversation and my emotional immersion, and consider my learning.
- I come to tentative conclusions about the relation of emotion, conversation and group dynamic.
- I reflect on, and evaluate, the meaning of this experience as I consider group dynamics in organisations.

#### **Clarifying my concern in conversation:**

M said:

She's right, we have formed a group that she is not part of, we talk about her behind her back, and somewhere she knows this.

There is always someone who doesn't join, if she weren't there it would be me.

When you said you did not care I was liberated, she was liberated.

If we do not care, then we are putting the bomb on the table.

What do I think about that? I say:

I do not care that I upset her because I am tired of upsetting her. She only wants what she wants, not what I want. She does not alter what she wants, she keeps asking for the same thing over and over, but not taking it, getting upset, being upsetting to others, she refuses to just take what she wants, and wants to get upset with us for not giving it to her.

I do not think that it is inevitable, that there is always someone carrying the distress in a group, and anyway that is not the same thing as 'always having someone who challenges the group'.

Surely the point of an Inquiry group is to ride the distress, live through it, certainly not get stuck in it.

Ahhhhhh, that was why I felt stuck and said I felt stuck. I felt stuck in distress. My distress or hers? Both I think. What do I care about being stuck? A lot, I care a lot about being stuck, and I have been thinking about my lack of passion today and yesterday. 'I lack passion, I have been saying, I must care about something. I am getting old, over satisfied, not challenged enough, too used to the easy life.'

S said:

Well if we do not care (about each other) then we just have position statements.

I think:

She caused the exact situation that she did not want by wanting it not taking it and getting upset.

I even read out my journaling after the last session...

'And what did I see that we might have created together today? A sense of how we bring ourselves into the inquiry, and how we ask for attention. A sense of how



it might be possible to satisfy our individual (satiated was a word X brought) inquiry by asking in a different way, by not asking but introducing the ideas we are working with. By linking, bringing my interest in – say – how we work together (in the CVN or in this inquiry), into the conversation following M's example of working with (facilitating) a network.

Perhaps looking for the commonalties, or speaking up about the contradictions, or even working contrapuntally, we begin to weave through the conversation something of our individual inquiries not necessarily articulated in the usual way. Do we begin in this way to speak outside the 'normal' addictive patterns of organisational, binding behaviours, whilst continuing to organise ourselves?

And I didn't notice my own repeating addictive pattern settling in! So why did I choose to read this? There's always a reason, just look more closely Eleanor.

**Looking more closely: Immersing myself in the experience.**

She said to me:

'What you said just now has really upset me, Eleanor.'

I looked at her, and thought:

She says she's upset, but she doesn't look upset, and I heard the words expressed in a way, which reminded me of a schoolteacher with a wagging forefinger, wagging it at me.

She was crying just then, but she's not crying now, she looks OK now, what does she mean when she says that I have upset her, what is she expecting from me now?

We have been around this cycle three times, it's the same every time and I am tired of it, don't have the energy to repeat the same postures again. I am not

learning anything, getting nothing out of the repeats except despair and feelings of disempowerment.

M has just showed her that she mistook what X said about 'purpose' for what the group as a whole thinks. She paid no attention to that; it was such good feedback...ahhhhhhhhHHHHH. Perhaps she really meant that she is upset with Mad because I have already forgotten what I said, was it upsetting?

I guess as I spoke I was thinking that she needs to pay attention to insights that might help her, even if they are uncomfortable.

There is a game going on here, she is manipulating us (me), and I want to step aside from the possibility that we are about to play the same game with the same rules for the fourth time. Fuck it. THIS is how I feel; I will play the same game as her, be childish, and blurt out what I am feeling.

'I don't care if you are upset'. There – now it's out.

What I meant was, 'I do not care to play your game just now, so I am 'going away', ducking out of this one, to avoid answering you because in this instant I do not know how to respond in a way which does not invite another repeat of the pattern that fills me with despair. I won't do your despair just now, if it's all the same to you.'

### **Imagining solutions: How can I learn from this?**

If I am unable to get into a posture, an asana, then I reflect on it, work it out, try out parts of the posture, exercise, wait for the ideas to come. I meditate, reflect on the problem, get involved in it in as many ways as possible.

I realise that I am unable to respond when I scent the whiff of manipulation, I am unable to respond to the victim asking to be made victim again, asking for help and ignoring opportunities (as I see them) to practise differently. The only people

that I feel compassion for in these circumstances are my children; the rest can go hang themselves.

This is absolutely appalling. It 'places the bomb on the table', it is my serious problem, and it is my spiritual block, a knot in the psyche. Prattling on about forgiveness makes not a jot of difference, I have known about this for the last 20 years and its still there. I do not notice as it creeps up again, it renders me speechless, sends me into infancy and only then do I begin to realise – it's got me again!

Now recognising, seeing the 'bomb' is there, I skirt around it, go away, think. It's no good the knot remains firmly tied, and it will reappear when I least expect it.

Reflecting again (as I am supposed to be meditating) the thought came to me. Write stories about victims and rescuers, talk about being a victim and about forgiveness – like doing the asanas - try bits of the exercise out and perhaps some cognitive understanding of what it takes to stop repeating my pattern will arise.

That and keep on practising the 5<sup>th</sup> Limb of yoga, pratyahara, control of desire.

I keep asking for what I want, and when it is offered I refuse to take up the opportunity and start feeling stuck. I feel the same way when I think that I see another person getting stuck in their repeating patterns.

This is what I take and what I have learned from working together in last Friday's Inquiry Group.

### **Evaluation: What might happen differently?**

What is the nature of this conversation? It is one I have had many times, usually in an organisational context, in which someone is refusing or unable to see my perspective and I start to react in habitual ways.

There are five of us in this inquiry group; three people have been specific about wanting an unfacilitated unstructured Inquiry, one has been easy going about the conduct of the group, and one wants us to agree to structure time for each participant to work on individual issues. At every meeting we have an unresolved (and now increasingly upsetting) conversation about this difference that is initiated by the person who would like boundaried delineated time for herself.

We are becoming less inquiring on this issue, as demonstrated in the three stories above. Passions are running high, of which some are controlled and others are not. I feel that there is not an equitable recognition of our (and my) emotional states, and three of us are compensating for this by talking about her behind her back. She says that she feels confused and left out, and suggests that she might be 'carrying the group's distress'.

This is a question about emotional landscape, are we as a group in distress or is the group being distressed by a participant's emotional responses? Probably both are true. Its effect is that we have been unable to construct an imaginary community of Inquiry and so we are creating connections with each other outside the main arena of the group itself.

There is no intimacy possible while these conditions persist, and the potential for generative dialogue is lost because words are not being spoken within a relational matrix. There is no context. Rediscovering our mutuality involves reaffirming our relationships. Our initial agreement to inquire together implies that there is recognition of the needs of both speakers and listeners and this is not happening. So whereas generative dialogue does depend upon the 'continuous generation of difference' (Gergen, 2002) too much emotional imbalance has created a distance that is not productive, that cannot be foreshortened except by generosity.

Whereas sustainable intimate conversations include an element of repetition, echoes of previous speakers' words, this repeating scenario is destroying our coherence and therefore our inquiring capability.

**Taking this example into my writing about agape and emotional relationships in organisation. In so doing I clarify the meanings of love.**

So, I am beginning to write about the emotional charge that is carried in conversations and the nature of group life in organisations, taking our capacity for gossip and chatting as my mental frame and which I know from experience can be a powerful force for good or ill. And I am considering it from the perspective of knowing in the heart as well as the head, and considering conversation as a means by which staff gain satisfaction with work, that what we do, and how we do it, is formed out of this emotional landscape.

How do we decide whether these emotionally charged conversations are right or wrong? Shotter writes about a particular kind of ethical sensibility that is encapsulated in speech and that enables adult conversation to take place.

'Making sense ... within a conversational reality, constructing a grasp of what is being "talked about" from what is "said" is not ... a simple one-pass matter of an individual saying a sentence and a listener "understanding" it. ... Specifying or determining them (events) sufficiently for the relevant practical purposes involves a complex back and forth process of negotiation both between speaker and hearer, and between what has already been said, and what is currently being said, the making use of tests and assumptions, the use of both the present context and the waiting for something to be said later to make clear what was said earlier, and the use of many other "seen but unnoticed" background features of everyday senses' (Shotter, 1993 p.27).

'This sense, these feelings (which are not properly called emotions), work as standards against which our more explicit formulations are judged for their adequacy and appropriateness' (Shotter, 1993 p.29).



This is an incomplete process of 'giving form to feeling' that happens in conversations, which refers to the imaginary and half formed grounding that people act out in their daily lives and which is given further form to the extent that people 'act back upon that background to give it further form' (Shotter, 1993 p.79). In this way the imaginary becomes imaginary entities and 'exert a real influence upon the structure of people's lives' (Shotter, 1993 p.80).

Conversation thus becomes an active form of living-in-the moment that gives form to feeling through an emotional landscape that contains an ethical dimension and which enacts itself through the dynamic of mutual interdependence. If I (or we) develop our inner capacity to give voice to agape, then love enters more fully into the conversation by widening the landscape of interaction to include agape's constellation of values.

## **DEVELOPING LIVING THEORY**

### **Theorising action**

Earlier I showed how extended epistemology in Heron's model of bi-polar congruence moved from experiential knowing, to practical knowing, to propositional knowing. Whitehead (1988) suggests that a living form of theory is developed by an individual theorising his / her action. He suggests that by developing propositional knowing, the inquirer learns how to articulate his / her living educational theory. The case example above shows how I clarify the meanings of love by theorising my action in conjunction with the ideas of Shotter (1993). It is this practical and propositional knowledge, combined with the ideas of others, which leads me to develop my living educational theory.

My inquiry is in three stages:

- I give an account of my practice
- I interpret this by immersing myself in the sensed memory of the event
- This then contributes to the development of my propositional knowledge.

I am changed in this process of inquiring as I write and inquire. This is the 'I' of the Complex Self in the inclusional flow, what I see with my 'eye' changes, my mind changes as I write. What remains unchanged is the discipline of spiritual practice and the dialogic practices of first person inquiry.

### **Research cycling**

There is an ebb and flow between the practices of being and the practices of doing. I cannot sit and meditate all day, and I cannot continually act without spending time in reflection. Spiritual practice is a daily practice, as is conversation and work. My inquiry moves between these frames within a 24-hour cycle. The rhythms of writing and inquiring with others overlay daily discipline of first person action and reflection. My journal writing is regular, but not daily. Inquiring with others within communities of practice goes through months of intense and creative activity, and then slows.

Often inquiring with others is the outward focus of my attention, which is then processed in the times of quiet inner reflection. Sometimes it is the work that I do in organisations that is uppermost in my outward attention so that the focus of the inward practise and the learning that arises is more concerned with agency and leadership. It is the movement between these rhythms that provide the opportunities for learning. These are cycles of action and reflection akin to that described by Judi Marshall, where she says,

'The ...frame I use to image inquiry is that of cycling between action and reflection. At its clearest this may mean planning to engage in some action or exploration, becoming immersed in the chosen territory in an appropriate way, noting as I go along, and then taking a step back and what I have experienced and done, later moving on again to plan another cycle of engagement (Marshall, 2001 p. 434).

In the case examples given above I show how I inquire into a particular event, reflect on it, either alone or with others, come to tentative conclusions, and after further reflection on what this means, taking into account the ideas of others, I begin to theorise my learning. The iterative stages of my inquiry move from action to reflection to theorising, and then back into action.



## PEER REVIEW PROCESSES

### Feedback from others on writing

I have had many conversations about love in peer supervision and elsewhere over the past two years. These developing discussions have signified a deepening of relationship that has enabled me to bring the non-verbal into language. These conversations have been a creative experience of knowledge production, an exchange of words and meanings without which this thesis would have been poorer and less 'true'.

With Madeline Church (Mad), we formed a peer supervision group with Jack Whitehead as our supervisor. Mad and I have been developing a joint understanding of the meaning of love, how it can come into practice (first) and how it might be possible to describe it (second). We have discovered that we share a particular passion for inquiring into shape-changing, seeing shapes, getting into the shape, speaking the shape, letting the shape change happen, being taken over by the shape, transforming with the shape, not being the shape, shouting at the shape. As I write this I know where Mad is, that she is not writing because she is on holiday but that while in New York she will buy a couple of books we have been referring to ... and so on... Luckily, writing this thesis has not been a solitary experience.

Lincoln emphasises this as a characteristic of person-centred interpretive work, as an intense 'lover-model' where parties to the research relationship and their relationships are, 'marked by a deep sense of trust, caring and mutuality' (Lincoln, 1995 p.284). Because the very nature of the social world is relational, 'emerging criteria are relational' (Ibid. p.278), reciprocity becomes an essential component of writing about lived experience. And echoes my experience, with Jack (Whitehead) and with Mad.

Case Example One demonstrates how conversation and feedback informs my inquiry. The importance of conversation in the transfer, exchange and development of meaning is also shown in Chapter Eight.

I found that the feedback from outside action research 'communities of practice' was less challenging and did not move my inquiry forward. Some responses

have been perplexed, others have questioned and some have been enthused. Generally feedback helped to show me how I might explain myself better.

Some examples of the written feedback are given below:

‘You seemed to be working through a number of questions, rather than making specific points. I cannot help thinking this is because you have not identified a specific model for relationship between the inner and outer. Because you do not make this explicit I felt I had to infer a number of things. For example, that there is a dichotomy between the interior and the exterior. This may be my reading – but this seemed explicit in the phrase ‘male gaze’ as if something objective and exterior was bound to have an impact on your perceptions. It seemed quite a mechanistic model – reflected in the phrase ‘pressure to conform’. What is it that makes us ‘imagine how others might see us’?’ (Daniel Bedingfield [my son] on Chapter One: written communication Jan 2004)

‘It seems somewhat strange to me that a thesis should go into such detail about intimate and personal matters but not show how these details are objectively relevant to the overall purpose of the paper... but that may have something to do with the way you have been encouraged to approach the exercise. Is it what you refer to as Action Research? Does this entail a sort of self-analysis to assist in developing an objective proposition about the future? If so how? Please explain.’ (Lynn Moseley [friend and previous work colleague] on Chapter One: Email communication autumn 2003).

‘You mention Eros and male models of leadership which surprised me as (without any background reading) I’d tended to link Eros and female models. I like the way you contrast Eros and Thanatos and suggest the important role of idealism and vision in organisations within a secular society. The discussion of triple loop might go best under the leadership heading, rather than idealism/vision.’ (Anna Bowman [friend and previous boss] on Chapter Two: Email communication Feb 2003).

## **APPLYING ACTION RESEARCH MODELS**

In this Chapter I provide a strong methodological discussion by considering extended epistemology, and Heron's model of bi-polar congruence (Heron, 1996). I consider the relational aspects of my inquiry process using Marshall (2001, 2004) as an exemplar, and show how I have engaged with others. I demonstrate how I apply Whitehead's five responses to the question 'How may I improve my practice?' and use this methodology in a case example to show how I develop my living educational theory from propositional knowledge which arises from reflecting on action.

I make the cyclical processes of my inquiry explicit by distinguishing between an initial action account and a series of iterative reflections that follow on from that account. In the seven chapters that follow this one, including those in Part Two and Part Three, only Chapter Five and Chapter Nine are not structured in this way.

Chapter Five is my initial experiential grounding that defines the territory for the rest of my inquiry.

Chapter Nine draws conclusions from the previous two chapters and articulates my theory of a pedagogy of presence.

In concluding this Chapter, the reader should note that my methodology does not develop through an analysis of action research models, or as a consequence of a deliberate decision to adapt one model rather than another to suit my purposes. My action research methodology arises out of my 'already absorbed' knowledge of action research models as I honour my subjective experience and allow love to guide my inquiry. In this way my methodology 'finds me' as I begin to enact the embodied meaning of these models. My methodology discloses itself as I inquire.

In the next chapter I show how this process took place.

## PART ONE: THEORY

### CHAPTER FOUR

#### INCLUSIONAL METHODOLOGY

*This chapter shows how I developed my methodology, and how I came to define it as 'inclusional'. I have referenced my writing in italics in order to demonstrate how I came to my conclusions. In doing this I rely on some of the theory in Chapter Two and the action research models in Chapter Three.*

*My method combines spiritual practice and action research first person practice. I use my journalled account of action to re-immense myself in my practice, and this is followed by reflections on my practice. These reflections incorporate daily spiritual practice, which includes two periods of meditation and a period of silence on a daily basis and the regular practice of yoga stretching. I use my reflective writing and the ordering principles of language to surface my underlying meaning.*

*It is this a slow, emergent, reflexive form that enables me to uncover the hermeneutical aspects of my inquiry methodology, articulate the tools that I use to progress my inquiry, and set criteria with which to judge my actions.*

#### ACTION ACCOUNT

*I write with a purpose, deliberately highlighting my feeling nature. I write semiotically. My purpose is to discover my research method and decide how to judge the worth of my inquiry. I begin by writing an account of what I did. The account shows me the way that my feeling initiates action, and that I process this in relational ways, talking to Mad, Jack, my sister, a friend and my neighbour, thinking about other PhD theses. I am immersed in feeling, trying to create a shared context, still holding my purpose (to define my methodology from a hermeneutical perspective, and decide how I might judge what I do) as a part of myself.*

It has happened again, the effect of duplicity; the guilty avoidance of responsibility and the passivity of the underlying anger got to me. I became

subsumed into this black hole of avoidance with no energy to escape. My capacity to notice this happening acts as a weapon turned against myself; I become low in spirit, depressed, and heavy, without hope. *Tamsic* is the Hindu term for this moody state.

*I try shifting my frame by moving into presentational knowing.*

I get a drawing out of the cupboard that I made 2 years ago, in preparation for bringing my thesis to a close. I do not feel good. I write about my response to the drawing, thinking that perhaps facing up to it, to whatever the completion of this writing might mean, will show me what these feelings are telling me, what I need to do. It doesn't seem to do the trick.

This is a place where I have been before, and one that is frightening to return to. I am alone, isolated, feeling the weight in my heart, seeing the bright blue sky above but not seeing it, feeling like this when I wake in the morning, it is always there. Connection with others does not seem possible, words are useless, I cannot feel love or joy, and heavy chains tie down my thoughts.

I start cutting and pasting bits of my thesis and feel bad again. Is it the family dynamics; is it the judging that I am doing to myself? I really cannot bear it, I feel annihilated, that I am being attacked. I telephone Mad (Madeline Church) who isn't there, then I leave a message and burst into tears, walk around the garden sobbing. Then I go up to my room and sit on my meditation cushion, 'What IS this about?' I want to write, so fetch my notebook and sit, and then write, then sit...and so on. Then I email Jack (Whitehead).

**Subject: Hurting and weeping**

I don't want to be judged by any standards other than my own. My standards are not cognitively expressed. I have been living up to other people's expectations, which are socially constructed, so that the setting of my own social constructed standards feels abusive, feels like the rape of the soul.

What do I really care about the superficiality of life? Only what I need to use to feel part of, to share and to give, as universal fundamental aspects of being human. I have been setting my standards of what I feel it is to be a living sentient being. And I feel very unformed and undeveloped in that respect. As if I am missing the point of it all and keep chasing after something that is already behind me. By cutting and pasting I am turning back on

myself, stabbing the dagger into my heart.

Standards for consciousness, standards for loving, standards for connection, standards for learning. It is nonsense.

How are we to judge critically something that is constructed by us, how can we judge the soul or the ground of being critically? We live it...  
How can we judge inclusionality? Surely that is a similar question?

I do not know how to continue this cutting and pasting. Do I do it anyway (very good at that ignoring the pain). Do I do it softly; can I do it with love? Why am I doing this - so I can be judged more easily by someone else?(private email communication, Feb 2004)

I say to my sister, 'I feel awful'. She says, 'You did well looking after our Mother.' I don't believe her, my sister is better at loving than me, she is a nicer person, I am her opposite. Later, my sister phones for some support, I feel a bit better.

A friend phones and I say 'I don't feel good, in fact I feel bad.' 'Hurrah', my friend says, 'a wonderful opportunity to get rid of your blocks.' I am doubtful, but go and have a couple of bashes at a pillow, just to see if that is what is needed. I don't feel very angry just vulnerable, with a good dash of self-pity thrown in.

My sister phones again and we agree that I will take my Mother home by car next Monday. I think this is a good move.

Mad returns my call, and I wail, 'I am depressed, it's all my Mother's and sister's fault'. She says, 'I thought it was your thesis you were depressed about.' I say 'Yes, it's all about comparisons and judgement.' She says, 'I just think you need to wait till it leaves you, you don't need to do anything special.' I feel lighter after that conversation because we go on to talk about Mad's way of negotiating writing her report for some work she is doing. Yes, there is an interesting world out there, and I can be a part of it.

I wake the next morning feeling heavy lidded again. I am refusing to meditate properly, it is a ritual not a heartfelt commitment, and the time goes slowly and I get impatient. I take myself off on my weekly five-mile cycle ride; I hate it, feel bilious, very cold and have to get off and walk the last long hill. When I get back

home my neighbour is in his garden. I tell him I feel like 'shit'. He says I should go in and have a coffee with Jay – his wife – 'she'll sort you out' he says. No, not this time, I have to sort out without demonstrating over-board with the neediness. Some self-reliance is required.

I return to the collage, the results of the cutting and pasting, trying to tease the words out that might describe the essence of my embodied learning and knowing from previous writing. Not an exhilarating experience, but the Rachmaninov piano concerto played loudly made up for some of my lack of vitality. I do not like the shortened version of this collage; it does not remind me of myself. I take photos of my drawings in the garden; my neighbour helps me out with the angles of sunlight. I show a photo of the knitting and explain one of the diagrams, he laughs and says, 'I think you're spending too much time on your own, you're sure you're not losing it?' He is a policeman and doesn't understand, but I might be too much on my own.

I decide the task for the next day is to type out the written responses to my Chapters. I was bowled over by my son Daniel's comments, so insightful, an act of love. Lynn's was SO Lynn, all rational and logical, and friendly.

Well, a good job done, now where does it leave me? I had decided the day before that I would walk over to the tennis courts to see this ball machine that the neighbours were using to practice their tennis, and then walk on to the stables. I wanted to know what the sign 'free manure' actually meant, to speak to the owners about how 'free manure' worked. Another lovely day for a couple of miles stroll.

At home again, hungry because I was dieting, I still was demanding food for myself. The walk did nothing to divert my attention from my stomach. After lunch I typed out the diet sheet for Mad's mother – just so I could stay in touch with food in some form or another.

Sat staring at the computer screen thinking, 'I'm seeing Jack tomorrow, must get on with writing the introduction...' Nothing happened, except my stomach hurt, I am fighting with my demands for food, fighting to feel brighter, fighting to get on with the writing. My stomach REALLY hurts. I take an IBS tablet in an attempt to fart or burp, to release the wind. I am saying to myself, 'You can't feel the

supreme loving presence within like Joan, the exquisite connectivity like Jacquie Scholes-Rhodes, you are pretending all of this stuff, nothing belongs to you.'

'Enough is enough Eleanor, go and sit on your meditation cushion.' Upstairs I go; it feels more like being sent to bed in the middle of the day for being naughty. But this is serious, and I take it seriously. I sit, then get my notebook, then sit and write and sit and write... I remember the lotus mandala, how could I have forgotten? I had failed to remember that I am an extrovert, that I contextualise then act, that I see love outside, that it is easier for me to recognise mandalic energy outside.

I am complete, I know what I must do, and I write for 4 hours. What comes is an analysis of the themes and the Chapters. I do not read, cut or paste, just remember, feeling my way through which ideas remain most important to me, that resonate with me, that make me feel connected.

I feel stronger, better, lighter, I am smiling and I have come home to myself again.



## THE FIRST ITERATION: REFLECTION

*Now I begin to write reflectively. Holding my purpose as a part of myself I respond to the dynamic of feeling / thinking / relating that I can discern in my action account. As I do this I am thinking about how I enjoy this ebb and flow, action / reflection / reaction and how this connects with Foucault's ideas. At the end of this first iteration I begin to refer to 'boundaries' and 'edges' (Bernstein, 2000) and discovering new contexts by blurring edges.*

### **Developing a sense of the aesthetic, the ordering principles, of my existence**

I read about pleasure, and Foucault's (Foucault, 1984a) ideas of how desire forms its representations through an accumulation of actions. My stories show where my desire leads me and how I live my learning through an accumulation of apparently unrelated activity, in a practical, smelly, unsanitised way.

In times of trouble there is chaos and I even begin to type the letters in the words in the wrong order. It is possible for me to act 'normally' when I am in the grip of troubled chaos, because provided nothing unexpected happens I know the rules of the games, the rules for being a Director, for being a Board member, for being a friend, a Mother.

Before I received the gift of divine love, I was not willing to conform and learn the rules; instead I would rely on my passion to guide me. I would respond with righteousness or pull myself out of the persecuted position to become a missionary with a vision to change the world, to use the touch of the keys on the piano to make a beautiful sound. But real life isn't like that; real life is being able to enter into a dynamic mutuality with others, even others with whom I disagree. Being effective means being able to hold my own opinions quietly whilst listening to the desires expressed by others, letting the multiplicity of viewpoints open new vistas, wash over me or through me.

In troubled times I won't let go of an obsessive desire to have my version of life recognised as superior to others. And then I must be obedient to the rules. I know this and I act on it, and I hope that it shows in the stories at the beginning of Chapter Five, in the way that I question my responses and am accountable to

myself. I have learned how important it is to continue to practice, to continue obeying the rules and carrying on with spiritual practise and inquiring even when I resist and feel discomfort.

*I begin to think here about how I work through distress.*

And by recalling that in even the smallest action I have made an ethical decision in continuing to inquire, I recognise a process that helps me to know that even though I am temporarily blinded I can feel my way out of the dark into the light. And this is the loving thread that runs through the dynamic of my living contradiction, living connectedness and living love forms my aesthetics of existence.

*I create more 'data', try something different, change my standpoint, and reflect on the increased options this data throws up.*

Commitment to spiritual practice and inquiry runs through my physical body, through my emotions, through my thinking. If I can't think then I exercise. If I feel over emotional then I exercise. Once I am calmer then I read and talk, reflect on what has been going on; think about what comes next. Try something different, do some cooking, meditate, put events, responses, and actions into a new context, see what happens next, and so on. There are lots of choices and different combinations and it creates lots of data.

*By not making judgements, the boundaries between feeling, thought and action become confused. I use my embodied responses to my language to indicate the direction I should take.*

This whole thesis is predicated on this inclusive way of working, gathering data that calls me whether it is incongruent or not, my being ready to let the writing show me its meaning. Holding true to an inarticulatable sense of what feels right whilst in the middle of contradictory evidence, feeling uncomfortable and being confused. It needs time, but this has worked out in the end.

Often there is too much data and I get confused. I need to get out of the mess, get to the edge, go back to the source, have a look and see how this fits (or not) with my intentions. Is there useful feedback from others? This is my time for analysis, but not for dissection. One of my rules (that I am gradually learning) is not to analyse what is 'me', because the 'me' is a changing part of an inclusional

dynamic. I cannot apply objective analysis to myself; instead I vary the practice and prepare for the inevitable alteration of my thinking.

*The categories of thought and action are reconfigured, and I begin to see how the material that has been generated 'fit' in a wider context.*

Then there comes a sense of what is happening, I get a sense of the mandala, of something coming together. That used to happen to me when thinking strategically as a Director and it happens to me now writing this thesis. It is the way that I design my garden. I let self-seeded plants grow, and then later decide where they look best and move them if necessary; making a beautiful planting plan from the resources available that will grow alongside the other plants planned and bought from the garden centre.

#### **My inquiry method mirrors my leadership practice**

*I carry a sense of 'boundary' and 'edge' as being important in my sense making. I check my reflection on how I carry out my inquiry against what I know of my practice. I do not lose sight of my ultimate aim, to bring what I know into my actions at work. Is there congruence here that indicates that I am on the 'right' track?*

I know that the principles of 'waiting until I can get back to the edge, of 'allowing things to emerge' which underlies my methodology are 'true' because there are echoes of this in my leadership practice. (I describe this process in Chapter Seven.) By successfully developing and introducing software in a small way in one department, I show how I went on to apply the expertise gained in new scenarios. None of the detailed logistics were planned in advance, it was messy and unclear, and staff asked for detailed directions and guidelines. But keeping the main aim in mind, and trusting the process allowed implementation to gain its own momentum. It meant that we developed a bespoke system that worked for us, that we did not need to buy in standard software.

### **My methodology surfaces contradiction**

*I move from thinking about congruence to a consideration of dissonance and contradiction. I hold an embodied sense of love in my mind, as I think about how I address (or not) apparent inconsistencies in my writing. I decide that I am following love's logic, not my own.*

I write about living 'in a world where emotions were often dishonestly ascribed (and) where I created coherence by looking for the gap between word and feeling' in Chapter Five. But in Chapter Eight I show that 'human beings have the capacity to act with joy, even when we do not feel like it.' And later I write about, 'giving up of my will to the will of another' and surrender. So now I suspend my earlier statement about gauging authenticity through an inner sounding board whilst continuing to pursue the unfamiliar logic of love. By doing this I come to understand the paradoxical nature of eros and agape, and in Chapter Nine, I 'resolve' this contradiction by theorising a pedagogy of presence.

In the process of 'writing my truth' regardless of its paradoxical nature, I am able to recognise, and point to, the 'aesthetics of my existence'.

## THE SECOND ITERATION: REFLECTION

### My Inclusional Methodology

*In this second iteration I begin to play with the concepts of boundary, edge and gap in Bernstein's (2000) theories. I look for congruence between these ideas and connect them with my thesis as a whole. I build on my earlier glimpses of the dynamical relation of feeling, action and dialogue, and incorporate Rayner's (2004) ideas of dynamic, fluid boundaries. I find that I have 'absorbed' Foucault's (1984a) concept of 'ordering principles' and realise that I reflect on the underlying grammars of language to make meaning.*

'There is always a boundary. It may vary in its explicitness, its visibility, its potential and in the manner of its transmission and acquisition.... Is the boundary a prison of the past...or is it a tension point which condenses the past yet opens up the possibility of futures?' (Bernstein 2001 p. 206).

I write on the edge of the social world, discovering meanings below the surface of appearance.

In general terms, my methodology is about feeling the qualities of the boundary between one relation and another, sensing the meaning of the difference and the direction in which this difference leads. Where there is no difference there is a collapse of meaning and no guidance to action, and habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) takes over. It takes a great deal of practice and discipline for me to see the boundaries and the invitation to action that they offer, and then to neither rush to fill that gap nor rush away from it. That is what meditation techniques teach me: how to experience silently with no action in the midst of action.

*I consider the place of extended epistemology in my inquiry method, and evaluate the 'truth' of my reflection against the Heron's theory of 'Bi-polar congruence' (Heron, 1996)*

In writing about my methodology my inquiry practice becomes an abstraction, propositional knowledge. As I follow the logic of my method I realise its truth in my drawings, the presentational knowledge shown in Chapter One.

Journaling my practice and writing accounts of conversation, helps me to place events in a broader context, to see what went well, and what could have been better. Reflecting on these events brings a new perspective. I rely upon my tacit, experiential knowing, those disciplines that enable me to respond on a feeling, intuitive level. My propositional knowledge develops in the gaps between accounts of my practice and my lived experience of practice.

*I begin to reflect on the significance of my embodied knowing and its relation to my propositional knowing.*

I aim to become an instrument of love, without thinking about it or deciding beforehand what this means. I think that the way to know what love means is to live it, which means that I must let go of those mindsets and mental frames that automatically direct my actions.

My purpose is to move the boundary of my skin, to become bigger than the 'I', to lose the sense of separation between inner and outer, that which defines subject and object. This lack of differentiation does not signal a collapse of awareness, but an expansion of awareness, becoming bigger than the 'I'. My inquiry seeks to develop mindful knowledge, seeks out differences with the aim of dissolving these sensory, affective and cognitive boundaries.

*I bring in Bernstein's ideas to include inward, experiential knowing, contrasting this with practical knowing.*

The skin forms a boundary between the outer and inner worlds. From Bernstein's perspective boundaries are formed by the degree of insulation between categories or classifications of knowledge (Bernstein, 2000 p. 6). Here he says, that insulation faces outwards to the social order and also faces inwards to order within the individual, and it forms a system of psychic defences that maintain integrity.

I trace the changing nature of that insulation between the inner and outer self in this thesis. In Part Two the 'I' is constructed through the experience of love (developing a thicker skin), and then in the later chapters in Part Three, the permeability of that boundary (I develop a thinner skin) increases as my understanding of love develops.

### **The discursive gap**

*I start to reflect on the relation of inward and outward knowledge, asking how do I learn? As I do this I compare the post-structural view of power in the social world with the boundary between the inner and outer world.*

Knowing that I learn in a responsive relation, I find my voice in an inward reflective arc, I follow the differences between my felt experience and my social experience.

The outer layers of the social order, of working in organisations, of developing strategies and implementing policies, all this is the familiar territory, this is all about technical competence, and this is not what I am inquiring into. In attempting to surface the themes in my texts there are no rules, there is no map, the territory is unknown.

*I refer to my action account at the beginning of this Chapter, going back to the question about dissonance and confusion, still holding the question 'How do I learn?' in my mind. I find that I learn in the 'gap', and that it is the transformatory nature of love that enables me to look into the gap and learn from the dissonance.*

I stare into the gap between the known and the unknown and start responding furiously. This 'method' is in the place where the unknown becomes the known; it is a place of feeling, thinking and doing that occurs in messy combinations. Here are the conversations, the weeping and gnashing of teeth, the failures, inquiry practices, and the discipline of spiritual practice. It is easy to see now how reflection must also be a critical component of my professional practice.

Not every learning point is as painful as the action account at the beginning of this chapter, but nevertheless in difficult times when I stare into this discursive gap I forget what I know, and must find it again.

What I show in Part Two and Part Three is, that as my inquiry continues, my trust in my methodology processes increases, and instead of seeing nothing when I stand on the edge of the unknown, I see the potential presence of love.

### THE THIRD ITERATION: REFLECTION

*By the third iteration I have crystallised my method, describing it as inclusional because I realise that I make meaning by collapsing boundaries and moving across gaps in such a way that the 'I' that is me is reconfigured as I let my psychic defences down. I realise that when I do this I clarify and change the meanings of love, that this process provides me with the potential for becoming an instrument of love.*

*And so I return to the second question that I held at the beginning of this process, 'how may I judge the worth of my inquiry?' and I take my lead from Foucault (1984a) thinking about aesthetics and ordering principles. I notice that Judi Marshall uses a list of principles as part of her process of articulating her concept of Living Systemic Thinking (Marshall, 2004).*

#### **The inclusional space and ordering principles**

*As I reflect on the dynamics of my methodology I incorporate my reflections on the dynamics of power in organisation and 'know' that the way I experience the world is also structured by organisational practices. As I remember the erotic pleasure of this dynamic I bring together my understanding of how language can carry power and meaning, and my understanding of how I learn through spiritual practice, letting the action 'teach' me, I realise that I when use language reflectively, I am asking it to reveal new meaning to me. I contemplate how I learn in meditation, and realise that I do not understand the process, but that there is a re-ordering of knowledge that occurs in spiritual practice.*

*In this way, reflexively holding this sense of pleasure as a part of myself, I come to name these processes the 'ordering principles of language', and the 'ordering principle of silence', and identify them as 'tools' in my inquiry process.*

I am influenced by my sensed memory of love, and that embodiment influences my reflections. The scanning and tracking of the inner and outer arcs of attention<sup>1</sup> show me the interplay, the dynamic weaving of changes in being and

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<sup>1</sup> I use this term following Judi Marshall, where she says describes the inner arc of attention as an unbounded scanning and tracking process, and the outer arc of attention as, 'reaching outside of myself in some way.' (Marshall, 2001, pp. 433-434).



doing, of one influencing the other. The 'aesthetics of my existence' now become a pleasurable experience as I become part of a dynamic inclusional flow.

In inclusional space there are no objective standards, but I track the themes arising from the process, and watch the process of inquiry, asking is this moving in the direction of love?

And I take with me into this process my knowledge of how power disciplines through social practice, how language constructs my reality, how I respond relationally and how I bring my embodied knowledge into practice.

- My methodology is developed from a sense of wholeness (or discomfort) in the interplay of feeling, thinking and doing. Much of my pleasure in inquiry is derived from this dynamism.
- There is the issue of responsibility and accountability. I am part of the reproduction of power relations within organisation, and I seek to influence this from within, as a leader. I seek to influence the politics of power in a different way.
- I recognise that I use the socially-scripted language of leaders and organisations, and I seek to alter my thinking, language and voice, to be 'heard' in the same arena but in a new way. I do this by reflecting on my accounts of practice using language, both an indicator of consciousness and as a structuring of consciousness. In this way, language re-orders my inquiry process.
- In dialogic encounter (as a reader, or in conversation) I work from felt experience, I do not 'critique' an issue, I research the ideas that support particular points of view, and come to an opinion on the basis of embodied resonances. Because I work in this way, 'silence' influences the patterns of my thinking and decision-making, and becomes an ordering principle.

### **Ordering principles and standards of judgement**

*I still have not found criteria for judging the worth of my inquiry. I am now engaged in an intuitive process, informed indirectly by theory and by my practical knowing, but directly reliant upon aligning myself with my embodied sense of love. The process is enacted in front of my computer. There is a part of me that is silent, concentrating, cultivating a felt sense of divine love. In my head I ask the question, 'How will I be judged?' I write something into the computer. I read it, asking 'What is this language telling me?' This process goes on until I have three criteria and feel a sense of completion and satisfaction.*

From the underlying grammars of language, in the spaces between what I know and do not yet know, I sense the transformative presence of love. My daily spiritual practice brings silence, a lack of movement, into my (o)ntology. My experience is that this silence re-orders my thoughts and my feelings. I do not know how this happens, and I do not inquire into this. All I know is that by watching in this silence, I can discriminate between thinking, feeling and the divine influences. This process is 'the ordering principle of silence'.

How is it possible to bring this individual experience into the social?

Is it possible to set criteria for judging the truth of a living theory that arises from the gaps between accounts and practice, criteria that could be applied by me in a personal assessment of how my practice feels as I am immersed in it, and applied in a more objective manner by my readers and by the academy?

I sit and stare at what I have written. I pause and wait for a felt sense of direction. I ask myself, 'What do I care about in the work that I do?' I am thinking about work scenarios, sitting in meetings, talking with people. I am feeling those idealistic drives to do good work. I am remembering the pleasure of working as part of a team.

I trust loving presence to work in this gap between what I know and what is yet to be known. From these thoughts, memories and feelings, the standards against which I measure the worth of my work emerges:

- I aim to recontextualise (reframe) what I am, or we are doing now; so that our joint work can become easier and more pleasurable.
- I want my professional practice to inspire and support relational based strategies and inclusive decision-making within organisations
- I aim to bring a resonance, a flavour of harmony linking the practical and invisible spaces in which we participate.

These three standards flow. The first standard arises from the ordering principles of language, the second recognises the responsibility that I have for the reproduction power in organisations, and the third standard relates to the ordering principle of silence.

These three standards are criteria against which I will judge my (o)ntology, and my professional practice.

## Summary

In this Chapter I show how my methodology emerges out of action research methods and combines with the ideas of others. I show how I use the ordering principles of language in my reflective writing, from which arises new propositional knowledge.

I use the phrase 'ordering principle of silence' to describe the effect of spiritual practice on my (o)ntological experience. In Chapter Two I show how the qualities of being can be influenced by religious perceptions of the divine from which spiritual practice derives. I maintain that this has specific effects on my way of seeing the world, and that I seek to realise knowledge through disclosure rather than interpret knowledge through analysis. This reasoning legitimises my decision to immerse myself in felt experience rather than bracket my experience in an attempt to be an observer of myself in action.

I go on to show how this immersion has led me to discriminate between knowledge derived from action accounts using the ordering principles of language, and knowledge derived from spiritual practice using the ordering principle of silence.

I show how I am able to set criteria with which to judge both my action and my 'beingness' by applying these principles.

In the chapters that follow in Part Two and Part Three I apply my methodology more freely, and in so doing I generate the data from which my findings emerge. Only in Part Four do I return to a more traditional approach as I evaluate my claims and consider their social relevance.

## PART TWO: LIVED EXPERIENCE

### CHAPTER FIVE

#### EXPERIENCING LOVE

*In this Chapter I articulate my experiential knowing, and inquire into the relation of feeling with thought, I write 'through' feeling as I also think about and respond to the ideas of others, whilst holding the sense of divine love as a part of myself.*

*The reader will find ideas and quotes repeated here that are also part of the propositional framing set out in Part One.*

*This Chapter was written at the beginning of my inquiry, before I had fully developed my methodology. As my inquiry emerged I began to use this reflective writing to learn more from my accounts of practice.*

*Many of the themes arising here are reiterated over the course of my inquiry.*

*The commentary in italics is intended as a signpost for the reader.*

#### STORIES

*This section covers some of my history. The stories demonstrate the transformative capacities of love and have informed my understanding of the generative power of love in adult learning and development.*

These stories cover periods in my life starting in childhood. I have moved a long way from these narratives, but to ignore them, to push them aside, would be to deaden the seed of something that is also vital and passionate.

These are fictionalised accounts following the themes of equality (left hand column) and the searches for love (right hand column).

In the left-hand column I have described some of my early experiences working in the public sector in the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's. They would be remembered differently by those who shared the same time and the same events with me.

This is contrasted on the right hand column with stories of my developing identity. The first story in the right-hand column is a complete fantasy. The right hand column has taken many rewrites of the personal stories until I felt satisfied that they were neither over sentimental, dramatic, or embarrassingly confessional, and yet told tales that are authentically representative of the psychological and spiritual healing process that I was (and still am) involved in.

The reader may find the columns distracting, but this is a metaphor for the way that I have made meaning in my life. It has been in large part, a fragmented, split and relatively solitary journey. By writing in this way I am reminding myself of the context within which the experience of love has brought me to a new sense of self.

Reflections on ... Equality of Opportunity

When did I first come across this term? Probably when I began to work for the LB Lambeth in the early 1980's.

Before that - in the 1970's - prior to working in paid employment, I was involved in various community activities that were focussed on increasing neighbourhood facilities for women with children in need and enabling women's voices to be heard within local government.

Between 1964 and 1968 I had three small children and so it was a natural step to become involved with the pre-school playgroup movement. From this experience I learned about the value of pre-school and/or nursery education and got together with other local women to lobby for increased local facilities. We carried out a needs survey on an estate in Kilburn which was (very briefly) reported in the Guardian! In the end the 'Brent Campaign for the Under Fives' achieved funding for a childminders' centre and a toy library which is still in use today.

1970 - 82 was a politically active time for me. I was both a prime mover and supporter of a whole range of new initiatives arising out

Myself, a fiction ...

Once upon a time there was a big potato and a little potato. They were out on a journey, a big exploration.

However the big potato was faltering, and asked if the smaller one would help. Now the little potato did not know how or what to do, but she tried to do what the big potato wanted, and together they muddled through.

Although the little potato got very tired, and her roots had grown longer and thinner than was good for her, she felt happy because the big potato was happy.

Then one day, the big potato disappeared suddenly in a big turmoil and without saying goodbye. There was nothing left for it but for the little potato to carry on travelling on her own.

Then, just as suddenly, the big potato reappeared with a baby potato. This time, however, the big potato said she did not want to carry on doing what they had always done together. Instead she sent the little one out to find useful and nourishing things to eat. The little potato NEVER let them down, and always brought useful and sustaining food back home.

Little potato did not get any reward for doing this, still this role made her feel important, and she quite liked exploring

of the networking potential of the local women's movement.

I had planned to stop volunteering for the CABx and go out to work part-time as soon as my youngest child started nursery school, but in the event my husband became ill and I went to work full time for the LB Brent while my partner cared for the children.

It was as a receptionist at an advice agency that I started my career in paid employment in 1972. The Seeborn Report had considered the problem of equality of access and had recommended setting up generic advice agencies combining Local Authority social services and housing advice agencies under one roof. The local authority recognised the need to provide accessible services, and I saw my role as an advisor, explaining to potential recipients the services and welfare support that was on offer, advising them about what was possible and acting as an advocate where necessary.

This was a generalised and universal service, which was to be delivered to those people who were not aware of their rights, or who could not read or write, or for whom bureaucracy was - for any reason - impenetrable. Taking this perspective was coherent with my socialist and feminist ideals, and at that time I felt that I was living and working in accordance with those beliefs.

However, it was a paternalistic approach that assumed a degree of hegemony of need which when combined with a requirement for conformity meant that many groups of people were excluded, either because the services were not appropriate or because the access routes to those services were too narrowly defined.

I was appointed to my first management position as Principal Officer in the Housing Advice Centre at Lambeth in 1979. I was

new places. Then she began to realise that while she was out, big potato and baby potato had fun. Sometimes little potato came back quickly to see if she could have some fun too, but every time she tried to join in it stopped. Like the light going off when you close the fridge door.

Little potato got anxious and afraid, but was consoled by knowing that she was very good at hunting and foraging and finding good and interesting things to bring home. Sometimes she thought that they might be pushing her to go out.

As she got bigger, little potato began to get lost when she went out hunting, and when she came home the feeling of 'something missing' became more and more painful. Then one day she realised that they were laughing at her. 'What's the point?' She thought, and wanted to become a mashed potato. But potatoes can't mash themselves - you need a potato masher for that.

So, little potato decided to live outside in the world.

not particularly aware of the anti-race discrimination legislation - Section 71 of the 1976 Race Relations Act - that left-wing Labour local authorities were using to introduce the new policies. Amongst staff, the explanation for the introduction of Equal Opportunities Policies was spoken about in terms of local politics and local Councillors desire for further re-election! The argument went something like this

- Labour Councillors need to be re-elected in marginal wards, and so they are using Equal Opportunities as a device to demonstrate that they are more accountable to their electors who live in social housing.
- These policies show that the Council is an equal opportunity employer, and as such it has a duty to act as a model to other employers and contractors.

These very laudable aims did not contribute to create the conditions that would enable me to either manage staff or deliver services effectively. Equal Opportunities training courses were obligatory for all staff and led to an emphasis on individual rights, and subsequently there were high expectations amongst staff who defined themselves as belonging to minority groups. There was confusion amongst staff members about their right to be treated with fairness and respect, and their responsibilities as staff members to the employer. This also (almost inevitably it seems to me now) led to challenges about how we recruited staff. At one time when the staff vacancy rates were high in the Housing Advice Centre, the Council agreed a strategy of only shortlisting and appointing registered disabled applicants for jobs. It was a difficult time for any

The flagpole...

I used to stay with my Granny in the holidays. She had a flat by the sea overlooking the promenade. One day I was playing up at the other end of the prom. The public conveniences were there. They were situated in a nice old red brick building that was always locked in the winter and surrounded by tough old green and yellow leathery leafed bushes. A few yards away, in the middle, between the bushes and the fence that marked the end of the promenade, there was a flagpole.

On that day there was a group of children playing there, and I wanted to join in.

'Let's play flagpoles' they said. 'Yes, let's,' I said. 'Give us your hands then,' they said, 'OK' I said and gave them my hands. 'Let's do the feet' they said, 'OK' I said and moved my feet together. 'This is jolly fun' I thought to myself.

Then suddenly I was alone. I turned my head to the right, and could see that everyone else was a long way away. Playing beyond the shingle beach, down on the sand where the tide had left puddles by the base of the big breakwater that had a light on the top. Only then did I realise that I had allowed myself to be tied to the flagpole.

It wasn't summer and the day was grey and misty and no one was around. I couldn't move my hands or my feet.

Around the corner of the loos came a boy. 'Where have they all gone?' I asked. 'Shall I set you free?' he said in reply. I nodded and he untied my hands. In my relief I tried to walk, forgetting that my feet were also bound. I fell badly onto my knees and I cannot remember who released my feet. I started to cry, and half-ran the long prom back to the flat, sobbing and shaking.



manager who wanted to deliver a high standard of service, and I guess it was the first organisational paradox I encountered.

Many staff actually became unmanageable, and I think that service delivery suffered badly. For the first time in my working life, I became aware of the difference between my espoused beliefs and my professional practice. During this period I learnt most from my failures in managing staff, which as a learning experience turned out to be ultimately positive.

I think that organisational disruption caused by imposing policies with inadequate implementation and planning cannot be justified even if the objectives are generally agreed and seen as a 'good thing'. It is presumably why consultation and participation in decision-making is now part of most organisations' culture. Now I wonder if perhaps the motivation for setting equality objectives were rather more political than egalitarian, and that this underlying intention may have, in part, have been the cause of the implementation failure.

I was working in Brixton during the 1981 riots. I'll never forget that revolutionary feeling of excitement that was still hanging in the air the morning afterwards as I walked around Railton Road. I do not remember how long after the original riot that the second wave of rioting broke out, but I could feel it in my bones beforehand. I could sniff that same feeling of excitement and fear in the air!

#### Race Awareness and Positive Action

A fresh turning point for me was learning that equality of access was not enough, and that positive action was needed in order to enable equal opportunity to happen. That's when I 'got it'! That's when I understood that there was more to this thing than communicating or managing staff

#### Searching for meaning...

In my late teens, I often read Wordsworth before going to sleep. This is an excerpt from 'Tintern Abbey'. I would read it aloud to myself.

And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting  
suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and the mind of man:  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all  
thought,  
And rolls through all things.'

#### Living on the edge...

I mean living on the edge of sanity, living in the margins of normalcy. Asking the questions,

- Why do I get up in the morning?
- Who are these people, who are supposed to be 'my family'?
- What did s/he say, do I understand enough to be able to reply? I open

well - that's when I learned to 'feel' what it was really all about - individual and collective empowerment and organisational transformation!

Race awareness training I found new and interesting. It enabled me to begin to understand how I might work with cultural differences and how this might lead to genuinely new and exciting change. Using Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act, the Council appointed specialist staff to work with particular community groups. As a consequence, I had the privilege of managing staff who set up locally based organisations, a couple of which thrived and developed into what are now, twenty years on, sustainable and growing organisations.

Race Awareness sessions had been designed by the training department as a way of reducing staff expectation, and encouraging a culture of tolerance. I think it came too late to 'save' the quality of the Housing Advice service, which continued to be interrupted by threats of strikes and strike action for a period of several years.

Working in Lambeth, I began to understand-in-practice how politics (with a small p) operates within organisations. I watched in amazement as local authorities like Brent and the GLC obtained legal opinions that enabled them to act in the way that they wished, and how my superiors interpreted and managed - or blocked - Council Members wishes. How the Council operated in practice was not to do with legislation, but to do with individual interpretation of the legislation and the influence exerted by key individuals. And when the Leader of the Council and other key figures in the Labour Party were successfully prosecuted and surcharged, it was clear that the issues were about central government control, rather than compliance with legislation. I was watching my 'theoretical frameworks' crumble at the same

my mouth and no meaning comes out, but s/he responds all the same - how is this happening.

- Am I dying now or later?

The fragility produced by anxiety and depression makes nonsense of socially constructed meanings. The person I understand to be 'me' easily slides away and what is left? I am a bag of bones, a collection of chemistry.

But I have things to do, children to look after, money to earn, food to shop for, meals to cook, a house to clean. If I cannot do these things, the children will go hungry, the house will be repossessed, the children will go into care and I will be living in the gutter. I long to be able to take the ordinary and the mundane for granted, to speak without self-conscious terror sitting on my shoulder.

But noticing myself teetering on the edge has become the focus of my existence. I have become super sensitive to the nuances of my body - am I still breathing? What was that thought, does it mean I am mad NOW? Have I started to fall into my nightmare or can I still clutch at the commonplace and keep pretending that I am here? Now the ground is shaking, everything is vertiginous and the goal posts are moving. I don't recognise anything anymore.

This is madness. They ask questions like,

- Do you sleep OK?
- How long have you had these sensations?
- Have you been to the Doctor's?
- Do you take Primrose Oil?

I am screaming inside and they offer opinions like,

- Well lets look up the symptoms in the medical books.
- You ought to do more yoga / swimming / acupuncture
- You should trust more, give up work, ask your partner to ...
- Its called alienation,

time as I watched the service disintegrate.

Marxists / feminists say it is political ...

#### Women's issues

I was much involved in the women's movement in the 1980's, particularly around peace issues. I was part of a Women's support group for Greenham Common, and we had consciousness raising and trust-building sessions to prepare for our visits. During the Miners' Strike, we held fundraising evenings to support the Miners' Wives and met regularly as part of our attempt to 'change the world'.

I am not an object, and I am not rational, and I have had all the medical help that is possible. Trust and security make no sense to me. I do my exercises and it makes no difference. If the Doctor takes me seriously it makes me worse, but I must go and see her 'just in case'.

I was an avid reader of Spare Rib, and although I did not recognise or think of the articles at the time as philosophical, but it was through this magazine that I became familiar with the feminist critiques based on post-structuralist and postmodernist theory. I had taken 'the personal is political' on board with a sense of recognition and relief that made a real difference to my life.

It is not surprising that I became addicted to minor tranquillisers. I used, on a daily basis, any combination of Valium, Librium, Ativan, in quantities that far exceeded the medically prescribed 'safe' doses. If I dosed myself into a semi-comatose condition, only then did I feel safe.

At the point when feminists were beginning to realise the importance of recognising differences of class and race between women's experiences, I began to realise the organisational possibilities that could be created through awareness of, and the honouring of, differing perspectives. My belief in the possibility of influencing and building new and better structures in society, and my commitment to bring about change in organisations and local communities remained and were still motivating me to action. However there were other strands in my working life that were running in the opposite direction.

Like an underground stream, these issues ultimately surfaced.

- There was the major discomfort of managing staff who made personal accusations of racism

and discrimination, some of which were probably correct, mostly they were not.

- Being a manager meant all managers became a symbol of oppression and authority, and groups of staff did not look further than the stereotype. Did I believe that this kind of hierarchical organisational structure was a 'good' thing and did I want to fulfil this kind of role?

- Organisational disruption was partly brought about by the implementation of equal opportunities policies, in which I firmly believed, but which seemed to have caused a reduction, not an enhancement, of service. There was an implementation gap between the introduction of a policy and organisational behaviour.

- Giving housing advice was becoming more dangerous. Staff were threatened by members of the public more frequently, and the resources available were being reduced. Watching this, being part of this, being held responsible for this, was personally too painful.

#### Finding my Self...

I was awakened like Sleeping Beauty by the power of a single kiss, love shattering fear and bringing hope and happiness into my life.

In 1984, by chance, I met someone who practised meditation. I had already started playing relaxation tapes for myself, as a way of recovering from drug withdrawal, and I knew meditation was an even better way of relaxing. I pestered this person asking to be taught meditation, and 7 months later was given a meditation technique.

It was during this teaching that I came awake, just like Sleeping Beauty, touched lightly and softly by love as I meditated. Love broke through my fear and because of this acceptance; forgiveness and hope flowered within me.

The simplicity and directness of this experience of love brought me home to myself. There are many theoretical ways that this experience could be explained. I choose to see it simply as unconditional love. The effect of this love was to create the potential within me for psychological, cognitive and spiritual growth, and enabled me to start an inner search for that 'sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused', which I knew - now - could become a living reality.

#### Moving on...

It was with an enormous sense of relief that I moved out of local government and into the Housing Association movement. Most of my sense of liberation was about escaping from the inexorable daily

demand from homeless or badly housed people for social housing. But some of it was also about escaping from the Labour Left straitjacket. Yippee, I could leave the school uniform behind!

I feel now as if there is nothing more that I can learn about the meaning or implementation of equal opportunity policies. Is this wrong of me, is my mind closed? I do not think so. When the results of the Macpherson Inquiry into the Stephen Lawrence affair concluded that there was institutional racism within the police force, surely no one was REALLY surprised?

My time at Lambeth Council showed me how anti-discriminatory policies work against powerful and dominant ideologies. It showed me how important such policies are and how it is important to set agendas to combat institutionalised discriminatory practices, and I think that this did make a difference in individual peoples lives. And we set up new community based organisations. But on the other hand, I also learned about the power of political persuasion, about how power and influence can be used unwisely, and the damage that policies - even ones that might be morally justified - can have either if there are hidden agendas or less than altruistic intentions are present.

It seems to me now that equality issues in the public sector are at the tip of the iceberg below which there needs to be a broad range of egalitarian social objectives.

How can I change the world now?

This is a question that I continue to ask. 17 years ago, I answered it by changing my job and spending time and money on self-development.

My attention turned inward, saying to myself, 'I cannot love others if I do not first love myself. There is no reason why I should have a better opinion about how to change the world than anyone else.' And I learned to be quieter, and stopped shouting about inequality and injustice and worked on the meaning of forgiveness instead.

My opinion about love ...

Belief without love is fanaticism

Justice without love is severe

Duty without love is uncaring

Order without love is obsession

Power without love is tyrannical

Life without love makes you ill

Two major themes seem to emerge from these stories, which I now realise have carried (I might say 'driven') me forward from early childhood to the present day. The first theme is a passionate commitment to equality, which arose from being displaced as the only child in the family, and the second is a hunger for love, which emanated from those tremendous feelings of loss when that happened.

These feelings are archetypal; they arise and are played out down the centuries and they are replayed in plays and fairy stories (the stories of Cinderella, the stories of the three sisters in King Lear are examples of this). It took many years for the effect of these feelings to ripen, and for the pain to be felt.

What these reminiscences tell me now, is that the work of bringing together my self-in-connection with my autonomous self started to happen through the medium of divine love experienced through meditation, and that has been at the core of my personal development over the past 21 years. .

## THE EXPERIENTIAL MEANING OF LOVE

*In this section I explore the relation of the body, feeling and language.*

CS Lewis (Lewis, 1960) distinguishes between Gift-love, 'which moves a man to work and plan and save for the future well-being of his family which he will die without sharing or seeing' and Need love 'which sends a lonely or frightened child to its mother's arms' (Lewis 1960 p.1). Both of these loves are 'Natural loves' (Lewis 1960 p.165) and are embedded in the way we live our lives and which arise through relationship with others. CS Lewis defines Divine Love as coming from God, who is not interested in the everyday. This Divine Love transforms Gift love into a capacity for loving the unlovable, and transforms Need Love into a longing for God, and this neediness makes us receptive to Grace and the possibility of transformation.

I think that this is what happened in my meditation teaching, which gave me a different, unconditional acceptance of who I was, unencumbered by place or function or cultural frame. At that time the meditation teacher did not know me; we had no previous connection except for the teaching itself. That is why I am calling this experience 'divine', it was a gift from the unknown, it was unconnected with any previous experiences, and it enabled me to love myself where I had previously considered myself to be unlovable.

What I want to communicate in this chapter is what was made possible through that initial experience of divine love.

### **How did I come to understand what the word 'love' means?**

*I begin to explore the relation of embodied knowing and language*

From a young age, if I had the idea that something was not 'right' that feeling of 'not rightness' came from my body. If the words 'I love you' or 'I am very angry' were said, I would decide what that meant and whether or not the statement was 'true' from the way I felt physically on hearing them. Then I would make a distinction between what I understood to be the intended meaning of utterance and my feeling response in order to decide the truth of the statement. It was a

way of experiential knowing that identified meaning by aligning the words with bodily responses and it enabled me to make meaning out of confusion.

This 'sounding board' was probably the beginning of the development of my sense of self as a separate person. This method of 'checking in', this feeling of 'rightness' would probably now be called 'being authentic' in the sense that the inner sounding board measures the level of emotional dissonance within (see Fineman, 2000 p. 6).

As a child, I lived in a world where emotions were often dishonestly ascribed and I created coherence by looking for the gap between word and feeling. I had an awareness that meanings and words were constantly changing, and that my words must represent that which had already occurred inside me. Thus much of what I say emerges out of an embodied knowledge which is not always easily 'named'.

'For we have the experience of ourselves, of that consciousness which we are, and it is on the basis of this experience that all linguistic connotations are assessed, and precisely through it that language comes to have any meaning at all for us...It is the office of language to cause essences to exist in a state of separation which is in fact merely apparent, since through language they still rest upon the ante-predictive life of consciousness. In the silence of primary consciousness can be seen not only what words mean, but also what things mean: the core of primary meaning round which the acts of naming and expression take place' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.xv).

Bodily responses, emotion and thoughts, perception and consciousness, and language seem to combine with awareness of emotional dissonance, to inform and enable me in relationships with others. These four aspects of myself increase the awareness of life's meaning by the ways in which they inter-relate in changing circumstances.

'Whether a system of motor or perceptual powers, our body is not an object for an 'I think', it is a group of "lived through" meanings which moves towards its equilibrium. Sometimes a new cluster of meanings is formed: our former movements are integrated into a fresh motor entity, the first visual data into a fresh sensory entity, our natural powers suddenly coming together in richer meaning, which hitherto has been merely foreshadowed in our perceptual or



practical field, and which has made itself felt in our experience by no more than a certain lack, and which by its coming suddenly reshuffles the elements of our equilibrium and fulfils our blind expectation' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.153).

In the paragraphs below I begin to unravel these meanings.

### **Embodied learning**

*Here, I explore my embodied experience.*

What is the body that receives these signals?

Starting from the physical, body image is clearly created by the food I eat, the exercise that I take and the clothing that I wear.

For the first time the feminism of the 1970's theorised the subjective experience of women. It helped me to understand how I had allowed my identity to be defined by the male gaze. That pressure to conform to an idealised model developed a self-consciousness based on how I imagined others might see me. As a consequence, I lost touch with my own experience by becoming over reliant on the messages received through an external surface of the body.

'My data suggests very strongly that the powerful male gaze which informs girls' imagination regarding their bodies is directly implicated in girls' self-concept... I think that this preoccupation (with appearance) exists because it is in adolescence that girls start to be looked at, and start to internalise the male gaze that enforces their looking at themselves. Not only do they look at themselves, but they always fall short of the ideal of the male gaze. Thus, their preoccupation with appearance can only be understood with reference to the social context in which watching invents preoccupation' (Rossiter, 1994 p.16).

If this way of experiencing the world, by imagining how it might look to an observer and then trying to fit into that imagined image becomes unnoticed and habitual, then life can become untenable. Certainly this is my way of explaining how it was possible for me to be crying out with pain (see stories in the RH column above) and appear to function and work (stories in the LH column above). I was experiencing myself not as a thinking person with an identity, but more as an object with certain functions. Rather than experiencing myself as a person

with "lived through" meanings' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.153) I was living instead through the eyes of many others.

This is seeing my body as an object; a thing that is created by the world which responds to and fits into the world by both its appearance and its action. I treat my body as if it is a 'thing' and nothing else. Here the body is placed within a social structure, within a visual field of perception framed by explicit, normative behaviours and convention, where how to act can be learned by following the rules. This is an acceptance at face value of the pre-given world into which I have been born, where my sense of self is achieved through social acceptance.

The 'gap between word and feeling' that was such a useful childhood sounding board is drowned out by the clamour of people I imagine to be watching me. The inner sense of discriminating between the inner and outer arcs of attention, of deciding what my experience means to me has been given up and replaced by external reference points situated on the surface of my body.

My body brings me into sensuous connection with the natural landscape with a 'more than human world' (Abram, 1996). This is a world that surrounds and is affected by our social reality, but to which we are usually blind and deaf and which we live in unknowingly.

'When we attend to our experience not as tangible minds but as sounding speaking bodies, we begin to sense that we are heard, even listened to, by the numerous other bodies that surround us. Our sensing bodies respond to the eloquence of certain buildings and boulders, to the articulate motions of dragonflies. We find ourselves alive in a listening speaking world' (Abram, 1996 p.86).

David Abram writes about living in a traditional oral culture. By chance he is trapped by the weather to sit in a cave watching the rain, gazing at spiders, and he loses his 'normal' sense of self and comes to understand that his sensuous physical experience of sight and sounds and connection with nature is mediated by language. He becomes the seer, rather than the subject who is seeing.

This sense of unity within the self does not arise through thinking or through the mind, but through the body, through synaesthetic perception.

'Synaesthesia ... the production of a sense impression relating to one sense or part of a body by stimulation of another sense or part of a body' (Oxford Dictionary 10<sup>th</sup> Edition.)

'Synaesthetic perception is the rule, and we are unaware of it only because scientific knowledge shifts the centre of gravity of experience, so that we have unlearned how to see, hear and generally speaking, feel...' (Merleau-Ponty 1962 p.229).

'...I surrender a part of my body, even my whole body, to this particular manner of vibrating and filling space...the sensation is nothing other than a certain way of being in the world...acted upon by our body...so that the sensation is literally a form of communion' (Merleau-Ponty 1962 p.212).

My mind prevents sensuous knowing by keeping perception on the surface of the skin. If I bypass the mind I can achieve unity through the senses. This is an example of how I do this from my journal:

### **Touching the piano**

The tips of the fingers brush the ivory; I test the volume of the note by the depth of the distance between the top of the key and the point where the felt hits the sounding board. How far is that? What is the distance between the very most tip of my fingers and my heart, my sounding board? How far is that? How do I turn the sound in my heart into music?

The fingers touch the keys directed by the eyes. The eyes read the music on the page; the eyes instruct the fingers. I do not remember the notes and there is no thought unless I need to stop and learn the correct notes. Then there is no music, just sound of plonkety plonk.

Knowing the notes, reminding myself through my eyes, the music has a shape that was there before, but I do not remember until I get to the phrase itself exactly what that form and shape might be. *F, forte, p, pianissimo, ff, pf, <, >*, I hear it through my nerve ends, moving the body in time, the rhythm, the lilt, watching the rise and fall, making each note count against

every other note, the meaning given to one note makes meaning with the next. There are no sounds and no pauses that are not in relation.

It is not possible to play the same piece the same way every time. That's the beauty of it, never quite knowing how it will turn out. (Journal, July 2003)

I not find it necessary to 'give up' the body, but I want to give up the ingrained movements and habits that link the mind with the body. Provided that the mind is not directly involved in framing the perception then new sensory experiences may bring the opportunity of freshness to the mind.

'...the body, in so far as it has its behaviour patterns...uses its own parts as a general system of symbols for the world, and through which we...understand it and find significance in it' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.237.)

As I read Abrams 'The Spell of the Sensuous' I start going out into the garden at night, looking up at the stars, listening to the wind in the trees, feeling chilliness, sinking my feet into the grass, thinking 'Who am I'. My ears have become attuned to the familiar sound of cars, tractors and aeroplanes, how do I learn to listen to the wind?

When I teach yoga, I say to the class, 'Stand in *Tadasana*, the mountain pose. Spread the soles of the feet on the floor; let them be the root of the posture. Get out of your head; pay attention to the soles of the feet. How do the feet feel in contact with the floor?' How can I be a mountain, what does it mean to be a mountain?

Asking the question, 'What is the sound of the wind?' and 'What does it feel like to be a mountain?' means feel and think yourself into a different shape, a different object, and gives the possibility of new sensuous awareness in the body. It broadens experience of what the body is, and creates new meanings.

Yoga postures (*asanas*) mirror the natural landscape and the common tools of everyday living in traditional societies. There is the plough (*Halasana*), the rod or

staff (*Dandasana*), the Serpent (*Urdhva Mukha Savasana*), dog pose (*Adho Mukha Savasana*). Changing the shape of the body so that it looks like a plough, the attention begins with the surface shape and then goes to those parts of the body that will not stretch or open as they need to do to achieve that shape. How do I stretch those parts? I begin a process of internal viewing, of recognising with the inner eye those parts of the body that need to move differently. The body becomes an inner landscape and the outer world is temporarily out of sight.

In giving up social posturing, the inner eye focuses more easily on the inner body. As the senses turn inwards, it becomes possible to use the breath to go to places in the body where the mind cannot go. The body begins to breathe in tune with the asana; the body is learning a new way of moving, the asana moves the body. When the posture is over, my attention turns outwards and the outer world has changed, it is no longer a place 'out there', but is an environment that moves and breathes as I do.

Hinduism denotes five 'bodies' or sheaths, only two of which relate to the material physical body. The skeletal sheath is the anatomical structure of the body and is called the *annamaya kosa* (gross body), and the physiological sheath, which is called the *pranamaya kosa*. In practising the asanas we 'give up' our habitual way of placing ourselves in the landscape, and in so doing become conscious of the breath (*prana*) and its relation to the soft contents of the body.

As I lie in corpse pose (*Savasana*) I let go of my body. I relax, feel at ease, loved and accepted. I am not thinking about love, just being with whatever happens, being quiet. As I watch the breath coming in and going out of the body, inhaling and exhaling within its internal rhythms, I find that there is a way of going beyond the physical body whilst remaining connected with it, which brings with it a coherent sense of who I am. The perception of the self broadens into another sphere of awareness.

### **Exploring the gaps between emotion and spirituality**

*In this section I address the relation of the emotional with the spiritual. An underlying theme is my continuing inquiry into the social construction of feeling through language.*

During adolescence the Romantic poetry of Wordsworth had fired my imagination with the idea of love diffused but nevertheless present alongside the ordinary and the everyday.

And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and the mind of man' (Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey in Ricks  
1999 p.343).

The poem is enticing and intoxicating. It filled me with excitement and an urge to know more. It was a source of inspiration, a place to go in my mind which helped to put a rosy glow around the ordinary everyday world, linked to those feelings of passion arising in me as I played Chopin and Mendelssohn on the piano. However, by the time I was in my early twenties, it was clear that this ideal could not be lived. I could not extend this feeling of joyous elevation to my life in general, and instead found that boredom, frustration and fear easily extinguished it.

Perhaps this kind of romance leads to a collapse of the rational into an idealised emotional past, which is regressive rather than developmental in its effects. This is what Ken Wilbur calls 'pre-rational', a longing for yesteryear. It is an attempt to mitigate the split between religion, art and science.

'We can see that the Romantics were already trying to ... unify that which modernity had put asunder. For above all else, the Romantics yearned for unity and wholeness ... they were the first to attempt to reweave the fragments, heal the wounds, become at home in the universe, be a humble part of life's wondrous web and not its arrogant master' (Wilbur, 1998 p.95).

Even though I read these poems, aware that Wordsworth was creating images of rural idylls that did not reflect reality, I respond in the here and now in a different way. The verse speaks to me of hope; it brings me to a sense of the eternal and provides a restful interlude from the harsher realities of my life. Nineteenth

century romance in the twenty-first century is more another turn of the wheel, an opportunity for renewal.

Often my life happens through a cloud of emotion, which seems to be regressive rather than generative and which creates sensations in my body of a clouded brain and a blocked heart. So that ignoring the emotional content of thought when those feelings are around could lead me to make decisions and act unwisely when under the influence of fear, anger, sadness. Understanding what I feel and knowing whether or not it might be temporary, and therefore might lead me to a different conclusion at another time, seems very important to me. It means that I now often respond quite slowly when aroused, a habit that has been formed because I want to bring wisdom into the action.

Daniel Goleman defines emotional intelligence as,

'the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. ... and includes five emotional and social competencies ... self-awareness ... self-regulation ... motivation ... empathy ... social skills' (Goleman, 1999 pp.317 - 318).

So as a child, when I strove to achieve emotional honesty by checking in with my own feeling and trying to understand others, I was learning the meaning of authenticity and the skills of self-awareness and empathy. Learning also that thinking and speaking were not necessarily aligned with feeling, or with feeling behaviours. In this way I was educated into a way of seeing the world as split between emotion and reason, where the latter was rational, objective and encouraged and the former was to be controlled and contained.

By learning to respond empathetically, trying to catch the meaning of words by the way they were spoken, I missed learning how to deal with strong and socially unacceptable negative feeling, which has led to this 'hangover' of strong emotion that can block my reflective and thinking processes. It means that often my passions ruled me, rather than my head.

To benefit from yogic practices there needs to be sufficient emotional coherence to be able to watch the fluctuations of the mind without causing psychological

breakdown. In Hindu practice this would be called building up the ego, which is the action-orientated part of the self and in psychological terms this would be referred to as building a stronger self identity.

Jack Engler (Wilber, Engler and Brown 1986) tells a story that illustrates this:

'The meditation teacher was visiting the U.S. for the first time and was very interested in the Western psychotherapeutic approaches to mental illness. The clinical psychologist was describing a very difficult case of an anorectic woman who was proving refractory to treatment. The teacher became engrossed in the case and asked many questions about the illness and the treatment. When the psychologist had finished, I asked the teacher why he was so interested. He said a woman had once come to the meditation centre where he was teaching with the same presenting problems. In addition she was suffering from chronic insomnia. ... I asked him if he taught her. To my surprise he said "No". For six weeks he merely let her come each day and pour out her complaints against her husband, her children, her parents and the injustices of life in general. He mostly listened. He also talked with her but he did not describe precisely how. This first part of her treatment then was conducted in effect through the medium of a special kind of interpersonal relationship. He also encourages her to sleep. Within a short time she began to sleep 4,8,12,14,16 and finally 18 hours a night – at which point she came to him and said "I have slept enough. I came here to learn to meditate." "Oh he replied, "you want to learn meditation,. Why didn't you say so.' I interrupted him to ask if he taught her Vipassana, ... "No" he said to my surprise again, "no Vipassana. Too much suffering". What she needed was to experience some happiness, some joy, some tranquillity and relief from so much mental agitation first, before she would be able to tolerate the deeper insight that *all* her psycho-physical states were characterised by change and were associated with suffering, not simply the obvious vicissitudes in her personal life history' (Wilbur et.al. 1986 p.25).

This quote gives an example of the level of psychological care that might need to be taken before teaching a person a meditation technique. These practices do not deal with the superficial; they are not easy quick fixes for unhappiness.

On the other hand, I gained sufficient sense of identity after my meditation teaching, to decide to go into therapy. In fact the effect of meditation also led me to start yoga classes. In Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga, the yoga *asanas* are the



third limb, and meditation the seventh limb. I seem to have been swimming the opposite way for a long time, going backwards to sort out my history.

The relation between thinking and feeling becomes clearer to me as I meditate. In meditation I say the *mantra*. This is a Sanskrit word whose meaning is irrelevant, but whose resonance is chosen by the *guru* to awaken the soul within. It is a sacred word that the student is asked never to repeat to anyone. This is because it is in such close alignment with the soul within. The *mantra* is the anchor around which I watch the action of my mind as it generates thoughts and feelings. I discover that if I repeat the *mantra* with desire, perhaps hunger, then thoughts of food arise. On the other hand if I repeat the *mantra* lovingly then peace may arise.

How I feel is linked with what I think, and is usually focussed on what I plan to do next and on self-preservation.

'Constantly one thinks, feels and acts as though one had a self to protect and preserve. The slightest encroachment on the self's territory (a splinter in the finger, a noisy neighbour) arouses fear and anger. The slightest hope for self-enhancement (gain, praise, fame, pleasure) arouses greed and grasping. Any hint that a situation is irrelevant to the self (waiting for a bus, meditating) arouses boredom. Such impulses are instinctual, automatic, pervasive and powerful. They are completely taken for granted in daily life.' (Varela et.al, 1991 p.62)

Although I have similar experiences whilst meditating to those described in the quote above from Varela, Thompson and Rosch, studying descriptions of fear and anger in the ancient Hindu texts does not resonate sufficiently with my lived experience for me to find enough practical meaning in them to satisfy my continuing search for authenticity.

Like the nineteenth century romantic poets, Hindu philosophy has not yet provided an adequate explanation for my day-to-day experience. I think of these writings as in need of interpretation, not by learning ancient languages and discovering new translations, but by distinguishing between the eastern and western psyche.

I intuitively feel that the expression of emotion is socially constructed, and that if I had been born in, say India or China, then the way those feelings are embodied and expressed would have been different.

There is no reference in Patanjali's philosophy to a student who is 'blocked' by or overwhelmed by emotional feelings, although there are a lot of references to desire and passion creating barriers to knowledge. Instead the aspirant seeks a state of calm and stillness by recognising the mental objects created by the mind that prevent peacefulness occurring.

In the East there seems to be more a sense of the collective to which a person will have strong ties that means controlling strong emotions does not become a denial of one's selfhood so much as a doorway into family and community membership.

'practising emotional restraint on behalf of a larger social network is not considered self sacrificial...the Chinese appear to understand such practices as a necessary part of spiritual development that can only come from displaying their sensitivity and responsiveness to others' (Fineman, 2000 p.85).

In the western world we have an autonomous sense of self which acts within various social, community and organisational contexts. So, the sense of 'I', the way that our affective and cognitive natures are understood to interact within the self, is very different.

This could be taken one step further in comparing the difference in marriage rituals. In India it is traditional to enter into arranged marriages and love is expected to develop as part of the developing relationship. In the West we marry whom we choose, supposedly for love and if the love leaves, then the marriage often ends.

So while the practice of yoga (*asanas*) and meditation have beneficial effects on both the western body and mind, the social expression and understanding of emotion, and probably also, its interplay with intellect, might be experienced radically differently.

Experiencing the 'sense of the sublime' connects me to my Self, other Selves and the world around me, and brings my sense of self into alignment. I do not comprehend a collapse of the emotional into the rational, as Ken Wilbur describes it (see above), but the sense of the sublime that is able to bring together the mental and emotional aspects of the mind into a unity, into coherence. This is not losing my identity but gaining a heightened sense of perception.

The great wonder of spiritual practice is that over time it enables me to distinguish intention and the action of emotion on thought, to notice the effect of desire on perception, and to begin to recognise the difference between desirous egoistic action and authentic altruistic action.

The 'sense of the sublime' is an authentic experience of self, that goes beyond the day-to-day ordinariness of things, and which has no particular call to action. It sees no separation between feeling, thinking and action because there is none. There is nothing to be 'done' it is beyond the usual relationship of feeling and action. So, instead of a competition between the head and the heart, there is recognition of the perceptual field of peacefulness that creates a relation between them.

### **Consciousness**

*Here I consider consciousness as it is expressed in Hinduism and Buddhism and begin to think about what might be universal human experience and characteristics.*

In the ordinary sense I think of consciousness as 'What I am noticing now', so that it is a word that describes my state of awareness. If I sit and ask myself what I notice, then I notice how I am sitting on the chair, my legs crossed, left toes pressed against the bar of the table, hot water bottle hot against my bad back – and so on. However, if I do not ask myself that question, then I notice nothing but the thoughts in my head and my need to get them up here on the computer screen. So the mode of consciousness is not the quite the same as looking at a 'thing' or an object, it also depends on my general intention as well as what I am attending to at any one moment. What I see will vary and will be dependent upon the breadth of my awareness and the modality of my consciousness.

The process of watching and noticing the mode of consciousness is what happens in meditation practice; here I have noticed that there is a seer seeing objects that are created by emotional field in which the thoughts arise.

'the experience that comes from the contact of each sense organ with its object. ... (it) always refers to the dualistic sense of experience in which there is an experiencer, an object experienced, and a relation (or relations) binding them together. ... The combination of mental factors that are present make up the character – the colour and taste – of a particular moment of consciousness' (Varela et al., 1991p. 67-68).

The mental factors that determine consciousness are ... contact, feeling, discernment, intention, and attention.

Intention 'arouses and sustains the activities of consciousness (with its mental factors) from moment to moment. Intention is the manner in which the tendency to volitional action (the second link) manifests in the mind at any given moment. There are no volitional actions without intention. This karma is sometimes said to be the process of intention itself - that which leaves traces on which future habits will be based.'

Attention 'arises in interaction with intention. Intention directs consciousness ... attention holds and focuses consciousness on some object' (Varela et.al., 1991 p.120).

'The point of mindfulness awareness is not to disengage the mind from the phenomenal world; it is to enable the mind to be fully present in the world. The goal is not to avoid action, but to be fully present in one's actions, so that one's behaviour becomes progressively more responsive and aware.' (Varela et.al, 1991 p.122).

Varela, Thompson and Rosch then go on to show how the grasping of the mind towards its objects might lead us to think that there is a coherent self behind consciousness.

If the brain and the ego are kept quiet then the mind (intellect) is able to see a greater range and the differing facets of consciousness.

'Thoughts create disturbances. By analysing them one develops discriminative power, and gains serenity. ... When consciousness is in a serene state, its interior components, intelligence, ego, mind and the feeling of 'I' also experience tranquillity. At that point, there is no room for thought waves to arise either in the mind or in the consciousness. Stillness and silence are experienced, poise and peace set in and one becomes cultured. One's thoughts, words and deeds develop purity, and begin to flow in the divine stream' (Iyengar, 1993 p.12).

The mind referred to here is the mind of the intellect sited in the *vijanamaya kosa*, the intellectual sheath; access to which is achieved when the brain is quiet. It is the same action that is being described by Varela, Thompson and Rosch when they write of 'mindful awareness'. And similarly as in Bhuddism, the cause of unhappiness and suffering is understood to be a lack of discrimination between the seer and the seen, between the inner transcendental and the outer material world.

So developing consciousness in the eastern traditions is an interior practice, where the operation of the mind (brain) and the senses is only related to the external 'life world' in so much as it enables the practitioner to develop discriminating awareness and to purify her soul. In Hindu philosophy there is a belief in the sense of 'I', the self, which changes as it goes through the stages of growth, through the seven sheaths of the body, until the Self ultimately becomes pure consciousness.

'God is the Universal Soul. The individual soul is the seed of the individual self. Soul is therefore distinct from the self. ... Unlike the self, the soul is free from the influence of nature and is thus universal. ... As a well-nurtured seed causes a tree to grow and to blossom with flowers and fruits, so the soul is the seed of man's evolution. From this sprout springs consciousness, Citta. From consciousness, spring ego, intelligence, mind, and the senses of perception and the organs of action' (Iyengar, 1993 p.11).

The appreciation of groundlessness, which in Buddhism leads to an assumption that there is no ultimate coherent Self, is the beginning stage of understanding in Hinduism of the first stage of consciousness. There are other similarities here with another Christian based spiritual work book, where the first daily lessons ask the practitioner to repeat several times a day,

'Lesson 1

"Nothing I see in this room (on this street, from this window, in this place) means anything."

... The statement should be (merely) applied to anything you see. Do not attempt to apply it to everything you see. ... A comfortable sense of leisure is essential.

Lesson 2

"I have given everything I see in this room (on this street, from this window, in this place) all the meaning that it has for me" (A course in miracles, 1975 p. 3-4).

I do not read these lessons as representing a philosophy of nihilism, so much as instructive practice encouraging the mind (brain) to recognise the possibility of changing perception as part of a preparation for changing consciousness. I see it having an effect on the cognitive function of the brain in a very similar way to the changing shape of the body in practising yoga asanas.

In Western philosophy phenomenologists have addressed consciousness from interior perception of the body – and in so doing have distinguished this from the *cognito*, the thinking self – but have maintained their focus of attention outwards from the site of the body. Merleau-Ponty writes:

'All knowledge takes place within horizons opened up by perception' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.207).

The self that speaks here is that which relates to others and to the world that is perceived through the senses, it is not leaving the world on one side and looking inwards beyond the objects created by the emotions and the mind. The internal representations created by the embodied self all relate to 'objects out there'.

Just how much I see of the world and its objects when I meditate, and deciding how much of this experience is socially constructed becomes unimportant, because what concerns me is the quality of consciousness. Have I understood the relation between the seer and the seen, and the nature of my involvement with them? How I might open up my perception in order to grow into awareness

of the next stage of consciousness, which seeks to understand the nature of the subtle matter.

This question is not about 'leaving' the world but about changing my over-attachment to it. If I am involved and concerned with results and outcomes, then the mind grasps and twists and turns, honourable intentions, remain action (ego) based and influenced by my desires. Training the mind in meditation means looking inwards away from the world, understanding the nature of the divine and to desire to know only that. Non-attachment means taking action, but to be unconcerned with outcomes, or plans. It means just allowing the inner nature to come forth, to emerge, whilst the self attends to the divine nature.

Is this divine nature socially constructed? I think that because it is represented through symbols and in words, it might be interpreted as such by those who reject the complex structures of the interior world that have been named by the Eastern mystics. Is spiritual practice a cultural practice, sited in specific locations and historical contexts? Yes, of course it is, we have much evidence of that (see Bocock and Thompson, 1985). How relevant are those ancient practises to Westerners today, and if they are relevant does that mean that we, our individual selves, have been born into a pre-given world in which there may also be universal sublime structures? Must I believe in 'God, the universal soul' to develop my consciousness?

I think that there are essences of truth in all social constructions, so that the superficial surfaces of what we mean by love or fear or death, and how it is symbolised, are contested and change over time. However the relation (and polarisation) between love and fear remains and is part of being human. So that the duality and plurality of values, emotions and intentions come into and out of fashion, but that the relation between the mind (brain) and the body, the relation of mind (intellect) and matter, taken with an awareness of the way that these relate to each other have always remained essentially the same. So, constructions of self and the relationship between self and others may be many and various in the Western world, but there remains an essential underlying structure of humanness.

The universal way that we make meaning through the senses is demonstrated here:

'Taking colour as an example of embodied cognition, the book shows that 'there are at most 11 basic colour categories... and in an examination of over 90 languages ... there are at most 11 basic colour categories encoded in any language, though not all languages encode all 11'(Varela et.al, 1991 p.168)

And that colour categories depend on culture specific cognitive processes, so that English contains the terms for both green and blue, whereas Tarahumara of northern Mexico has a single term that means green or blue. ... So, in answer to the question, which came first, the world or the image? 'Our discussion of colour suggests a middle way between these two extremes. We have seen that colours are not 'out there' independent of our perceptual and cognitive capacities. We have also seen that colours are not 'in here' independent of our cultural and biological world. ... Thus colour as a case study enables us to appreciate the obvious point that chicken and egg, world and perceiver, specify each other' (Varela et.al, 1991pp.171-172).

The way that our desires still focus our attention is echoed down the centuries through the Upanishads:

'As our desire is, so is our will.  
As our will is, so are our acts.  
As we act, so we become.

We live in accordance with our deep driving desire,  
It is this desire at the time of death that determines what our next life is to be.  
We will come back to earth to work out the satisfaction of that desire.

But not those who are free from desire; they are free because all their desires have found fulfilment in the Self.  
They do not die like the others, but realising Brahman, they merge in Brahman.  
So it is said:

When all desires that surge in the heart  
Are renounced, the mortal becomes immortal, Here in this very life.

As the skin of a snake is sloughed onto an anthill, so does the mortal body fall:  
but the Self, freed from the body, merges into Brahman, infinite life, eternal light'  
(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in Easwaran, 1987 p.48-49).



Leaving aside the issue of reincarnation, this poem shows the relation between desire, the seer and the seen, which can still be experienced by the meditator today.

These are internal representations of consciousness, rather than social constructions, but it does assume that the world and how we come to know it is, at least in part, pre-given.

So I believe that there is a perception, or a horizon, beyond groundlessness where the self sees beyond the 'always in relation' material world, which means that the mind's eye sees itself seeing physical objects, emotions and thoughts. And I act on this presupposition with the intention of carrying out my spiritual practices with a feeling of hopeful lovingness in my heart, at the same time watching and noticing the mental objects that interfere with the creation of more hope and more love.

I believe what I have in part experienced, in part been told, and in part read about, that if I meditate lovingly (the loving seer) with the relatedness of loving consciousness then I will perceive love (the seen). What I imagine this all leads up to is a synaesthesia of lovingness, a coherence of the self where there is only loving, in which the 'I' moves into the *anandamaya kosa*, the bliss sheath, the first stage of what Hindus call 'enlightenment'. These are the higher stages of consciousness

'Conscious spirit and unconscious matter  
Both have existed since the dawn of time  
With maya appearing to connect them  
Misrepresenting joy as outside us...

The Self is hidden in the hearts of all,  
As butter lies in cream. Realise  
The Self in the depths of meditation –  
The Lord of Love, supreme Reality,  
Who is the goal of all knowledge' (Shvetashvatara Upanishad in Easwaran, 1987  
p.218-219).

## LANGUAGE

*In this section I continue to think about social construction and the relation of speech and sensuous experience to action.*

I intend to write about language as action, as either an utterance or as the written word, action that involves both bodily felt emotion and the cognitive functioning of the brain.

One of the results of Abram's (1996) sensing experience was that after he returned from living in traditional societies, he began to question the development of speech and narrative. He had noticed how his extraordinary sensing contact with the natural world disappeared when he returned to live in urban surroundings. In his literature review of anthropology, Abrams showed how in traditional societies, language echoes the sounds of birds and animals and how by telling stories about the landscape knowledge was passed down the generations.

Through the writings of Merleau-Ponty, he showed how speech is not a disconnected function of the brain but a sensuous experience.

'...Merleau-Ponty's view of language as a thoroughly incarnate medium, of speech as rhythm and expressive gesture, and hence of spoken words and phrases as active sensuous presences afoot in a material landscape (rather than as ideal forms that are present but are not part of the sensuous world) – goes a long way toward helping us understand the primacy of language and word magic in native rituals of transformation, metamorphosis and healing. *Only if words are felt, like bodily presences, like echoes or waterfalls, can we understand the power of the spoken language to influence, alter and transform the perceptual world*' (Abram, 1996 p.89 [author's italics]).

Perhaps that is why in Hinduism it is not considered necessary to know the meaning of the mantra, which is the Sanskrit word used in meditation, it is the vibration of the sound, not the meaning of the word that has the effect on the body and mind. It is the sensuous connection with the rhythms of the physical body, which contributes to the altering of consciousness through a process similar to synaesthesia, a forgetting of the body and a letting go of the mind.

Abram then shows how drawing pictures helped tell the stories, from which the Jews created a phonetic alphabet. From there he tells of the Greeks, the move from mythic stories to the use of reason, which he maintains was only possible because the alphabet ceased to be linked to pictured sounds of the landscape, and of the birds and animals. So Socrates and Plato were able to challenge the myths and stories of the ancient Greeks, because of the development of a language that was separated from the sensuous world. Language has become a medium in its own right, which has become separated from the body and the world we live in. However this disconnection is not something that we are generally aware of.

'(W)e live in a world where speech is an institution. For all these commonplace utterances, we possess within ourselves ready made meanings. They arouse in us only second order thoughts; these in turn are translated into other words which demand no effort of expression and will demand from our hearers no effort of comprehension. Thus language and the understanding of language apparently raise no problems. The linguistic and intersubjective world no longer surprises us, we no longer distinguish it from the world itself, and it is within a world already spoken and speaking that we think' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.184).

Cognitive reflexivity has become possible because recognising the sensuous way that we use language has now added a new dimension to our understanding of meaning making. And what that reflection enables us to do is to develop new knowledge.

'What then does language express if it does not express thoughts? It presents or rather it is the subject's taking up of a position in the world of meanings. ... The meaning of the gesture (of the body) is not contained in it like some physical or physiological phenomenon. The meaning of the word is not contained in the word as a sound. But the human body is defined in terms of its property of appropriating, in an indefinite series of discontinuous acts, significant cores which transcend and transfigure its natural powers. ... We must therefore recognise as an ultimate fact this open and indefinite power of giving significance - that is of both apprehending and conveying a meaning - by which man transcends himself to new forms of behaviour, or towards other people, or towards his own thought, through his body and his speech' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.193-194).

We can create new understandings through the exercise of speaking, and in the act of hearing the spoken words. But it seems to me that language is not the medium, but just plays a part in speech. The utterances are made through a sensuous contact with the body and its relation to the world. The subject is the seer, the sensuous body in all its glory. The object is the 'life-world' the environment, another person, something that is 'out there'. The relationship is fuelled by the significance that is given by the seer to the world outside her. This significance is an imagined relationship which has a value placed on it by the seer.

'If the qualities radiate around them a certain mode of existence, if they have the power to cast a spell and what we called just now, sacramental value, this is because the sentient subject does not posit them as objects, but enters into sympathetic relation with them, makes them his own and finds them in his sacramentary law' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p.214).

As I write it becomes ever clearer that I find at least a greater significance in the meaning derived from physical presence than in the use of mere words. So, I am beginning to realise that there is even a subtext of thought-language that I do not think to share unless it becomes necessary. This is an entry quoted from my journal:

I buy a chair, and show it to you, 'Yes', you say 'It is a very nice chair.'

I like the colour and shape, but you do not. It is likely that if we talk about it, we will both be able to understand why you do not like it and I do.

We take it in turns to sit on the chair. I do not think it is comfortable, you think it is. It is less likely that we will be able to understand each other to the same degree, because the description of discomfort has become more subjective and this probably makes our respective understandings less easily comparable.

In fact I might feel so uncomfortable sitting on the chair that I think 'This isn't a proper chair, I cannot sit on it' and I cease to think of it as a chair.

But I think it is beautiful, which is actually why I bought it, and so I keep it in the corner of my living room.

Every time I walk past this beautiful object I think 'I do like that', but I do not think of it as a chair.

Then I cease to notice it at all – it has become part of my mental furniture.

Occasionally when visitors come round they point to this beautiful object and say, 'That's nice where did you get that from?' And at other times when visitors come round they sit on it, and I think 'Oh! They think it's a chair!'

Some time later, perhaps years later, I am hovering around it and I get annoyed with how heavy it is to move, and as I pass by I start thinking that perhaps it does not fit into my colour scheme. And then another thought occurs, that the furniture in my living room would work a lot better if that object wasn't there any more.

So, I ask the people who admired it in the past if they would like it. I do not know if they think of it as I do, as an art object or whether they think of it as a chair. It doesn't matter.

However if no friend wants it, I put an advertisement in the local paper saying, 'Chair for Sale!' (Journal June 2000)

In the language of Saussure, I am choosing between two signifiers (the use of the word 'chair' or 'beautiful object') in relation to the referent (the material object) and what is signified (what comes into my mind when I think of this object). The choice of the signifier depends upon the context, so that when I am thinking internally the referent is a 'beautiful object', but when I am speaking to someone else it could be either a 'beautiful object' or a 'chair' depending on how the other person expresses him/ herself, and then when I am offering it for sale to unknown persons, the signifier becomes 'chair'.

In many ways I am still the child that I was, creating my own meaning and translating it into words from a language memory bank!

But this is referring to language as a 'System', a method of communicating that involves just remembering words. I want to use language to share common experiences. Whilst I recognise that to be adult means being able to use language appropriately, I continue to look for the way that words are spoken in order to understand what is being said (in order to understand the 'signs', the

combination of the signifier and the signified). If I do not 'get' the context, then I tend not to speak because I feel unable to take part in the common meaning making that appears to be going on around me.

I notice and absorb what people mean, not just by the words that are spoken, but also by the way they are expressed through the body and in conversations I am using language as a way of responding with my body as well as my mind.

'Thus there is a subtext to our speech, as every utterance constitutes only an *attempt* (which is hardly ever satisfactory) to 'develop' a sensed thought seed into a voiced utterance flower' (Shotter, 1993 p.44).

What is the sounding board that provides indications of what is 'right', how can we tell right from wrong? Shotter (Shotter 1993) writes about a particular ethical sensibility to others that enables adult conversations to take place.

'This sense, these *feelings* (which are not properly called emotions), work as standards against which our more explicit formulations are judged for their adequacy and appropriateness' (Shotter, 1993p.29).

This is a measure of a form of integrity that is constructed out of everyday conversations in which meanings and relationships are developed. 'The process of giving form to feeling' is how Shotter (Shotter, 1993 p.79) refers to the imaginary (half formed) grounding that people act out in their daily lives, and which is given form to the extent that other people 'act back upon that background to give it further form'.

'So that the imaginary becomes imaginary entities and 'exert a *real* influence upon the structure of people's activities' (Shotter, 1993 p.80).

It is from this that Shotter develops the idea of 'root metaphors' that create particular ways of formulating our relationships with the world. That the ways we think and speak, as well as the words that are used, become part of an unacknowledged pattern which is self-perpetuating. This is also referred to as 'the fundamental circularity of conceptual systems' (Varela et.al, 1991 p.12).

Shotter shows how these imagined relations are ingrained, how words carry power that is invisible. He maintains that we need to alter our mindsets from

being 'referential-representational' by which we assume that those who have knowledge over a pre-existent given are in some way superior to us, and move to a rhetorical-responsive mind set which recognises diversity of perception in a participative universe and where we do not have to submit to the other person's truth. The rhetorical-responsive mind set is thus one that is inclusive of experience and of sensuous knowing, and

'we find (the universe) ontologically rather than discover it epistemologically or scientifically' (Shotter, 1993 p.75).

I think I have a midway position between the idea that the universe is not there unless we discover it by participating in it, and the alternative idea that there is a universal cosmic structure out there waiting for us to discover it. I want to continue the ontological theme and develop a thesis in which the universe finds us when we imagine, think, speak and act coherently in tune with spiritual values. After discovering that the world we see is transitory, I suggest that then and only then, are we able to co-create within a participatory universe because we have lost that grasping self-centredness that leads us to believe that we are separated and in competition with each other.

My reaction does not mean that I entirely reject the idea of difference and diversity, or social constructionism and the importance of speech and relationship in the creation of meaning, individual or joint identity. I think of the paradox - of socially constructed meaning and the illusory nature of what we think is reality - and of the unchanging nature of the essence of being human - and use the contrasts to weave the fabric of my own meanings.

Shotter, with Rorty, has already rehearsed the argument for language as a reflection of mental images, which they maintain is a self-deception because it is a representation of our already socially constructed imagery. A tautology I suppose.

'Without the notion of mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself' (Rorty in Shotter, 1993 p.100).

If language deceives, it does so because it emanates from socially constructed internal imagery, and this is only a problem if the world is seen as fixed and pre-given.

However if these imaginary constructions are focussed on living values without looking for specific outcomes, then I would say that this construing of the world would not be circular. This is not equivalent to New Age idealism, which Shotter is scathing about, but a way of creating a new context in which change in the circumstances of the 'real' world might take place. It is not a denial but an attempt to create better ways of speaking, relating and acting by developing a living attachment to spiritual values.

Shotter goes on to suggest that new knowledge is created in the writing of accounts (as opposed to theories) and that in order to do this the emphasis of language needs to be on verbs and doing, rather than describing nouns and things. This does seem like a good way of developing new ways of acting in the world, because it is a way of changing the way language is used which shifts us away from thinking that the world is fixed, and suggests that what we see is not as real as we might think.



## GROWTH THROUGH LOVE

### **The transformatory nature of love**

*Here I return to love as a generative power, this time considering it in social settings and across cultures.*

I have been writing about how I experience love. I am building up a narrative, which shows me how I have changed through this experience.

To make space for these changes, I have been writing about renunciation, giving up my usual way of being in my body, making that physical effort in the yoga *asanas*, giving up strong emotion and the thoughts that go with it, watching how my mind works, and changing my language so that it creates rather than defines. Reaching in this way, beyond my current understanding of myself, is a process of giving up and changing what I know of myself now.

I have been writing about different constructions of the self, referring to consciousness as the medium through which the self is observed. Using the body, emotions, the mind and language as tools by which the self alters its perception of its inner and outer world.

Implicit within this writing is the question, 'What is this "I am"', who is this self? How do I widen my perception of love so that I may live more lovingly with others and with my self? How do I change who I am?'

When I was first taught meditation all these questions were furthest from my mind. I just needed to sort myself out, build up my self-esteem and get more ordinary: getting to be more 'normal' was actually how I thought of this process. By the time all that had been achieved, I found that I was on some kind of spiritual path, not so much one that I had chosen, but one that had been chosen through the unfolding events of my life! There is no way that I could have planned this, or made it happen.

The goal of the spiritual path is explicitly stated in Hinduism and implied in many of the world's religions. It is to become aligned with God, to realise the Universal

Soul, and it is through love that both eastern philosophies and Christianity tell us that we eventually come to be that.

'Whether the experience be from the nihilist, middle or eternalist perspective basis-enlightenment is identical across traditions. ... The relationship between awareness and structure is permanently altered. ... Awareness is once-and-for-all freed from mental structures. ... Once, however, awareness is freed from such constructions, the yogi realises these models and concepts are not in themselves accurate statements about reality. ... The shift in the relationship between structure and awareness also has a profound impact on the experience of human suffering. The main claim...is that enlightenment can alleviate human suffering' (Wilbur, Engler and Brown, 1986 pp.269-270).

'In other words, the deep structures of worldspaces ... show cross cultural and largely invariant features at a deep level of abstraction, whereas the surface structures (the actual subjects and objects in the various worldspaces) are naturally and appropriately quite different from culture to culture. Just as the human mind universally grows images and symbols and concepts ... so the human spirit universally grows intuitions of the Divine, and those developmental signifieds unfold in an evolutionary and reconstructible fashion...' (Wilbur, 1995 p.276).

In Hinduism, there are three ways to enlightenment, through devotion (surrender to God), through action and through knowledge. The path through devotion is the easiest way, although that is not easy, and each of the three Paths eventually lead to the Bliss Sheath (*anandamaya kosa*).

'The Lord of Love is above name and form. He is present in all and transcends all. Unborn, without body and without mind, from him comes every body and mind. He is the source of space, air fire, water and the earth that holds us all' (Easwaran, 1987 p.112).

In Buddhism, love is referred to as unconditional compassion,

'As the student goes on, however, his mind relaxes further into awareness, a sense of warmth and inclusiveness dawns. ... The loss of a fixed reference point or ground, either in self, other or a relationship between them, is said to be inseparable from compassion like two sides of a coin or the two wings of a bird. ... It can be known (and can only be known) directly. It is called Buddha nature,

no mind, primordial mind ... that which cannot be fabricated by mind. ...And the natural manifestation, the embodiment, of this state is compassion – unconditional, fearless, ruthless, spontaneous compassion. ...or simply “awakened heart” (Verela et al., 1991p.246).

In Christianity the love of God is described in this way:

‘When we see the face of God we shall know that we have always known it. He has been party to, has made, sustained and moved moment by moment within, all our earthly experiences of innocent love... By loving Him more than them [*earthly beloved’s*] we shall love them more than we do now’ (Lewis, 1960 p.169 [*my italics*]).

The spiritual path is a process of self-development, which takes place through the medium of love and I intuitively feel that this love is carried on the rhythm of the Cosmic Tides.

‘Two mighty tidal urges rule the worlds, both of them are living spiritual powers. One is the movement of Rakshasas, fleeing as in fear to all the quarters of the universe. This is the great outgoing Creative Breath by which not only is the universe spread forth in space, but all the inner life of thought and feeling flows outwards seeking what it may devour. ... The second movement is symbolised by hosts of Siddhas, is nivrutti, the Homeward flowing tide. By this all the treasures of experience, the fruits of the World Tree are gathered in once more to the One Life like mighty rivers flowing homewards to the sea’ (Sri Krishna Prem, 1969 p.108).

Plato (in Wilber, 1995) described these flowing tides as ‘movements’.

‘...we see in Plato one of the first descriptions of two movements related to the unspoken One, or two movements related to the Spirit itself. ... The first movement is the descent of the One into the world of the Many, a movement that actually creates the world of the Many and blesses the Many and confers Goodness on all of it: Spirit immanent in the world. The other is the movement of return or ascent of the Many to the One, a process of remembering or recollecting the Good: Spirit transcendent to the world. ... In Plato the two movements are given equal emphasis and equal importance, because both were grounded in the unspoken One of sudden illumination’ (Wilbur, 1995 p.320).

Wilber goes on to name the inflowing breath or homeward movement as Eros, it is the 'ascending' movement, the love that pulls the love of the Many towards the love of the One, the Universal Soul. In today's cultural terms, Eros is the focussed ascending masculine one-pointed passionate loving. The outflowing breath is its opposite, the descending flow of love, or Agape, from the One to the Many, and might be typified as the feminine, the compassionate, finding of love-in-relationship, embracing love.

Then he goes on to write about the doctrine of the Cambridge Platonists who had 'their roots in the Platonism of the Renaissance'.

'It was a doctrine in which love played a central part; not only the ascending love of the lower for the higher, Plato's Eros, but also a love of the higher which expressed itself in care for the lower, which can easily be identified with Christian Agape. The two together make a vast circle of love throughout the universe' (Wilber, 1995 p.339).

In his footnotes to this page, Wilber (1995) refers to Agape as Grace. He goes on to link the descending tide of love with the compassion of the Buddha, and the ascending tide of Eros with the Universal 'Brahman' of Hinduism. But this 'vast circle of love' is not some kind of cosmic iteration in cosmic soup, it is the soup itself. And with the collapse of the dual aspects of love comes the realisation that the movement of the tides is also love itself.

'In the Great Circle of Descent and Ascent, the Nondual can be represented as the paper on which the entire circle is drawn; or again it can be represented as the centre of the circle itself, which is equidistant to all points on the circumference... Beings can be said to be closer or farther from the Summit or the Source (that is the meaning of the Great Chain of Being) but no being is closer or farther from Suchness; there is no "up" or "down". Each individual being is fully and completely just as it is, precisely just as it is, the One and the All' (Wilber, 1995 p.347).

And if I meditate, think and act with love then these universal qualities of humanity, that are also shared with the Divine, will bring me closer to a conscious awareness of this 'Suchness'. The Absolute, this Suchness, this consciousness,

also called by Wilber (Wilber 1997) 'the One Taste', arises from the fusion of Eros and Agape, the typically masculine and typically feminine ways of loving.

I am putting words now to that experience of love that was passed to me when I was taught my meditation practice, and which gave me a glimpse of this 'Suchness'. Not only is it beyond social constructions and shared cultural understanding, but it is also beyond dualism.

I do not recall this as a 'peak experience' so much as an experience that created a great devotion to the practice and to the teacher. In Sanskrit this is called *bahkti*, devotion, and *bahkti marga*, is the Path of Devotion. It was by striving to give meaning to these feelings of devotion through the practice of meditation that I was unknowingly learning and developing my emotional and cognitive capacities.

What is so exciting about Wilber's work is that he integrates religious beliefs and practises into a universal and historical context without either denying the validity of those particular beliefs and practices or disregarding either Eastern or Western philosophy. Whilst he is not the only writer to have linked early Hinduism and Buddhism with early Christianity, he also brings Plato and the later Greek philosophers into an alignment that enables me to make sense of my cultural heritage.

Here is an example from Plato:

'Up to this level in the Mysteries of Love, Socrates, perhaps you could have initiated yourself ... Whoever wishes to proceed along the right road to this goal must from early youth appreciate beautiful objects and ... he must love one body only and generate in it beautiful discourse; then he must realise that beauty in any body whatsoever is sister to the beauty of another body; and if it is his wish to pursue what is beautiful in its outward form, it would be foolish not to recognise that one only and identical is the beauty of all bodies. And having understood this he must become the lover of all beautiful bodies, calming his ardour for one body only, regarding it as a small thing and trivial. Next he must consider the beauty of souls as being of greater worth than that of bodies, so that, wherever there is beauty of soul, however slight he must be content with it, love it and take care of it, ... And after the institutions let the "guide" lead the disciple up onto a higher plane, to the level of science ... and looking at the ample range of the

beautiful – no longer infatuated, like a slave, by the beauty of any single thing, of a youth or of a man, or of a sole institution, but turned to the vast sea of beauty and contemplating it – produce many beautiful and uplifting thoughts and discourses in a boundless love for knowledge ... As he who has been educated so far in amorous things, contemplating beauty step by step and in the right way, once he has come to the end of the pathway of love he will suddenly witness a beauty by its way stupendous' (Symposium, 210-211 in Raphael, 1999 p.92-93).

A relatively recent example of the integrating and the educating power of love comes from 'Unfolding BodyMind':

'Emotions modulate the operation of intelligence as a concrete aspect of everyday life. Thus envy, fear, ambition, and competition restrict intelligent behaviour because they narrow our attention and vision (in all our senses). These emotions prevent us from seeing the other, or from seeing the circumstances in which we find ourselves. This we know in everyday life; we show this when we say, 'he is blinded by ambition' or 'she is frozen with fear'. If you consider your experiences, you will likely see, as we claim, that the only emotion that broadens our vision is love. In love we accept ourselves and the circumstances in which we live, thus expanding the possibility of intelligent behaviour. In this sense love is visionary' (Bunnell and Forsyth, in Hocking, Haskell and Linds, 2001 p.163).

### **Stages of growth**

*In this section, I begin to surface questions about linear models of adult development.*

Wilber has brought together the cognitive development theories from Piaget, Kohlberg, and Habermas with the higher stages of spiritual growth delineated by Plato, Christianity, Hinduism and Bhuddism. From this he has created a stage model of development covering the human life span.

He sets out these stages, maintaining that the line of development is an invariant sequence in which each nested stage emerges from a 'fulcrum of development' from within each previous stage. There are lines of regression, examples of getting stuck within a stage, and transitional moves between stages, and whilst it is possible to skip a stage, Wilber maintains that this development is unstable and that later regression is inevitable.

The basic structures of the stage model are cognitive, physical, moral and spiritual, and at each stage there is an integration and stability of the interior and exterior perspectives of the self. Only at the higher levels does Wilber refer to the operation of consciousness.

Is it possible to translate these levels to other contexts and / or to incorporate loving ways of learning into such schema?

If there are already significant differences in how emotions are controlled and expressed between the cultures of the east and the west, there are also likely to be significant differences in how the lived meaning of Eros and Agape are understood. And then this in turn will affect the 'fulcrum of development' and the transition between stages.

However, Wilber does not refer to 'love' in the lower (conventional) stages of development, although he critiques the 'Ascenders' for using Eros for their own ends and the 'Descenders' for misusing Agape. About the Ascenders he writes:

'the violent hand of Phobos lurks always behind the 'love' of the higher that they profess to all and sundry. ... The Ascenders are destroying this world because it

is the one world they are all certain that they thoroughly despise' (Wilber, 1995 p.340).

#### And about the Descenders

'compassion gone mad; not just embracing the lower but regressing to the lower... At the end of the game of that reductionist drive is death and matter, with no connection to Source. ... It attempts to save the lower by killing the higher' (Wilber, 1995 p.340).

In this way Wilber has a lot to say about Divine Love and the higher realms of consciousness, and a lot to say about how ideas of Divine Love may be misunderstood and misused, but nothing to say about how Divine Love might affect, and be affecting, the everyday world of ordinary people who may not aspire to, or even be aware that these levels of consciousness exist. This, of course, is what this thesis is all about.

The capacity for dissociation of the body and bodily feeling from the 'rational' mind, which has arisen in the last 300 post-Enlightenment years is likely to mean that basing the stage model on cognitive development means that it is privileging a more masculine approach. The different nature of this mind / body split may not be replicable either between genders or across cultures.

To be fair, Wilber does provide an explanation for highly developed individuals that does not rely on cognition. He calls it vision-logic:

'Where rationality gives all possible perspectives, vision-logic adds them up into a totality... vision-logic can hold in mind contradictions, it can unify opposites, it is dialectical and non-linear, and it weaves together what otherwise appear to be incompatible notions' (Wilber, 1995 p.185).

Wilber names the vision-logic of the non-cognitively based higher realms as 'centauric awareness' of the world:

'Centauric-integral awareness integrates the body and mind in a new transparency; the biosphere and noosphere, once finally differentiated can now be integrated in a new embrace. Feuerstein therefore refers to this newly



emerging structure as 'psychosomatic' involving the 'resurrection of the body' evidenced in such movements as holistic medicine and ecological sensitivity. "It is a whole-bodily event" he says, "feeling through the lived body. It does not take flight from bodily existence in any form. Rather it is grounded in unmitigated acceptance of, or primal trust in, corporeality. It is the transparent body-mind."... Where previously the verbal-mental-egoic self used those structures with which to view (and co-create ) the world, now those structures themselves increasingly become an object of awareness and investigation by centauric consciousness (it is not just the mind looking objectively and 'representationally' at external objects – the reflection paradigm – but the mind looking at the mind intersubjectively' (Wilber 1995 pp.194-195).

So, whilst Wilber maintains that it is possible to reach these higher states of consciousness whilst living in ancient traditional societies or in non- Western educated communities, he tends to privilege the logical and integrative capacity of cognitive structures.

I guess none of this would matter too much whilst the stage model theory remains an abstraction that has no application. However, Wilber (Wilbur 1995 p.361) refers to stages as hierarchies or rankings, which were translated in the Catholic Church from contemplative awareness to political orders of power. And in Chapter Two I look at Torbert's leadership development profile (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert 2000) and its application in organisation. It is here that the translation and application of a stage model that does not take the experience of gender and cultural differences into account creates the potential for continuing to emphasise the masculine.

Wilber's integrated model makes the spiritual, and the higher realms of consciousness available within a cognitive model of development. With the current fashion for considering and highlighting the spiritual aspects of organisation, this could clearly set the scene for abuse of power by leaders, managers and consultants. It is possible that the stage model if roughly used as a map could then magnify existing power relations within organisations. If we continue with greater emphasis on a cognitive integration of the self, what space can be created alongside this which can also provide the loving contexts within which we can learn well?

### **The lotus flower**

*In this section I develop my critical responses to models of linear development.*

The thousand petalled lotus flower has its roots in the slimy, thick and vile smelling mud. Its leaves lie on the surface of the lake as its flower bud forms. In the light and in the warmth of the sun's rays, the bud gradually unfolds its petals one by one releasing the intoxicating perfume of the thousand petals, pink and shining in the light. And finally in the centre of the flower is its jewel, the heart of the mystery of life, the unspeakable beauty and radiance of Divine Love. That is the Hindu metaphor for what we are. The yearning for love that we all experience is the sap that causes the plant to grow towards the light. As it grows and the petals open, the lotus flower is both warmed by the sun and fed by the nutrients lying in the mud at the bottom of the lake. The lotus has been given its own natural intelligence to grow and unfold.

Within this context of the lotus flower I am developing the seeds of an idea around constellations of values based on the four spiritual qualities of forgiveness, love, peace and harmony. Now these are not values that are independent of each other. It is not possible to love completely without forgiveness, if you have love then you have peace, and where there is harmony there is love, peace and forgiveness. Take one quality and 'live' it and the other three qualities are present. This is a constellation not an arrangement or a pattern, although when those qualities are active they form their own pattern, and like the petals of a flower they have their own intelligence.

This lives in the imagination as an inspiration which like the lotus flower creates qualities within which to live, or to return to when they have been forgotten.

And the intoxicating nature of the lotus flower mandala is not just a feast for the eyes, an object illuminated by light, it IS the light, not just a bouquet for the nose but the perfume itself. The patterns of light and scent are not separate objects for the delight of the senses, but become vibratory patterns that enable the body and mind to absorb the resonance of the mandala, and enable the mandala to resonate with the mind.

'Whether the mandalas come into being as part of our individual healing process, or whether they have been handed down through the centuries as a healing for us all, each has a uniquely transformative energy which lives on in a person who creates or is touched by it. Even if the mandala is destroyed [as in the Navajo and Tibetan sand mandala traditions], what is destroyed in physical form remains in subtle form, and if we have been touched by it, it lives on in the very structure of our cells and psyches' (Cornell, 1994:xix).

A representation of my meaning is given in the drawing on page 16.

Whilst there are linear developmental models in both Hinduism and Buddhism, there are other ways of denoting spiritual growth, like the mandala, that do not privilege cognition.

'Human inner development is more like the weather than like a train line. One responds to what kind of monsoon season arises... We need to have enormous respect for the defences that we have used to survive, as well as for the possibility of opening. In that sense, the most skilful teachings may be those which melt one open rather than somehow pry open the door, which later only slams shut' (Rothberg, 1996 p.34).

Again this speaks to the power of love, in this case the descending love of compassion, agape.

In this conversation, specifically set up to discuss Wilber's stage model of development, in his interview with Rothberg, Kornfield concludes:

'I think that the models are very important in clarifying the maps and the territory of consciousness and development. I think it is enormously helpful to have these maps of different possibilities of human experience from the ancient spiritual literature. What's often missing is a sense of how one travels through the territory. ... The big danger of using a map is the inclination to impose it unwisely on the natural opening of experience.' (Rothberg, 1996 p.36).

So, the opening of the lotus flower is the metaphor for growth and spiritual awakening that I respond to without reservation. It explains what 'opening' feels like, not just in my mind but in my body also. There is a yoga *asana*, *padmasana*, the lotus pose in which the knees bend and the feet fold into the opposite front

groin, and from there the spine automatically becomes vertical, like the stalk of the lotus flower. And the head is lifted and the gates of consciousness open like the jewel in the crown of the lotus.

But the opportunities for growing strongly come from the smelly mud, from the contradictions in life, and contemplating the picture of the lotus is not enough. The mandala is another vehicle from which I learn.

I have another mandala in front of me now, showing a medieval Christian picture, given to me on retreat 10 years ago. There are six pictures, with Christ's face in the middle, joining the miniatures together. It is intended to show events in the lives of human beings that must be embraced within our own life span. It shows:

- love and adoration of God by the angels,
- betrayal and conflict symbolised by the betrayal of Jesus in the garden at Gethsemane,
- sacrifice is symbolised by the resurrection in which the shadow of death is cast out
- union with God is shown through the celebration of the Eucharist,
- peace is symbolised by healing of body through care and nursing,
- humility is symbolised by the birth of Christ in the stable

And then the pictures are grouped by the way they are joined to the Godhead in the centre of the page. Betrayal and conflict, communion, humility and new birth are joined moving outwards from the centre. Adoration and love, sacrifice and resurrection, with the symbols of peace are joined and moving inwards towards the Godhead.

The point is that the metaphor of the many petalled lotus flower and the symbols of the Christian mandala enable another way of coming to know the self. These are not reliant on the integrative capacity of cognition to develop a wider consciousness. Instead this knowledge arises through experiential knowing, which still enables the physical, emotional and mental aspects of self to come to know themselves but through vision-logic rather than intellect.

This is a perception of multiple development which come together like a mandala to form clusters of values that guide and teach by becoming the reference point for practise.

'There's the development of generosity, ethics (*si/a*), renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, resolution or determination, loving-kindness (*metta*) and equanimity. ... What I see as really important is to help people apply wise attention to every aspect of their lives, so that each of the *paramis* get developed' (Rothberg, 1996 p. 43)

I think that this way of thinking about spiritual growth is comparable to the way that 'preservative love' and the maternal work that fosters the growth of children, comes forth (Ruddick, 1989). Approaching spiritual learning tenderly and with gentleness, learning to recognise the strength of the negative forces of resistance when they arise, willing to foster growth with love and compassion.

The degree of abstract thinking that I am involved in depends on the circumstances in which I find myself. Those early adult years caring for children taught me to use a strange mixture of practical thinking and 'reflective feeling' which I think leads me to favour the poetry of metaphor, poetry and symbol as a way of expressing my understanding of the nature of spiritual growth. This is the developmental map that works for me.

## LOVING PRACTICES

*In this section I begin to address the relation between spiritual practice and action research methods.*

There is a rhythm to my day, which when I was working full-time began with meditation in the morning and was taken up again when I came home from work, and ended with a review of the day just before sleeping. Now that I am self-employed on the days when I am at home, I am able to include a period of silence in the middle of the day. It is not enough, but it is what I do. Other people I have known are able to break off from work in the office and go to the loo, or go for a walk outside to meditate, do silent practice or make affirmations, but I could never practise regularly in the office.

I would call meditation a radical practice, because it is aimed at changing my character, to change my awareness of 'Who I am'. This practice actively seeks to alter my consciousness, to broaden awareness as well as to speak to me inwardly of the meaning of what I am doing. Sometimes in meditation the realisation of what I am actually doing comes as a terrible shock. Sometimes if I am very tired, I fall asleep during the evening meditation. Sometimes I daydream and try to notice that is what I am doing. Sometimes I leave my thoughts and feelings and find peace. Radical practice is a willingness for change to happen unconditionally, without control but with awareness, like the metaphor of the lotus flower the mind's natural intelligence is allowed to rise like sap towards the flower bud. It is the willingness to give up the little everyday self (*annamaya kosa*) that allows this growing to happen. It is called renunciation in Hinduism and sacrifice in Christianity.

Disciplining the body, changing its shape in the *asanas*, controlling the breath and controlling appetites also helps let go of *annamaya kosa*, the material world. Ways of doing this are contained in *Astanga*, Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga (Iyengar 1993) and are part of Hinduism's practical philosophy. *Astanga* might be a linear model but as I seem to have come to it backwards, starting with the seventh limb of meditation practise rather than starting with the first limb and going upwards, I am using the model as a cluster of images, rather than a developmental line.

If I put my work-in-the-world ahead of my commitment to spiritual practice, then the outcome will eventually show me that success-in-the-world is my true intention. In time events will show me the difference between my true desire and what I say to myself. And events might also show me how much effort I need to make in order to reach my goal. If I meditate with sincerity and not sweep things under the carpet, then I will also be shown these things. This is now the level of authenticity that I seek.

Movement of the body in the asanas releases tension and locked in feeling, and the breath is able to move to those places, to link the mind and the body. Loving practices have given me a stronger self-identity (Hindus call it ego) with which to recognise wrong and right action, and to deal with my emotional history. Over these years I have developed my ability to think and to reason, to stand up for myself. However I remain aware that my spiritual practice needs to be in every corner of my life, that whilst

'Spiritual practice is not separate from driving to work or changing the diapers'  
(Rothberg, 1996 p.30).

As yet my experience of Divine Love is separate from those day-to-day activities.

'We are not only slaves of the culture in which we have been brought up; we are also slaves to the vast cloud of misery and sorrow of all humanity, to the vastness of its confusion, violence and brutality. ... We are concerned rightly with the outward change or reformation of the social structure with its injustice, wars, poverty, but we try to change it either through violence or the slow way of legislation. In the meantime there is poverty, war, hunger and the mischief that exists between man and man. We seem totally to neglect paying attention to the vast accumulated clouds which man has been gathering for centuries upon centuries – sorrow, violence, hatred and the artificial differences of religion and race. We neglect these hidden accumulations and concentrate on outward reformation. This division is perhaps the greatest cause of our decline.

What is important is to consider life not as inner and outer, but as a whole, as a total undivided movement. Then action has quite a different meaning, for then it is not partial. ... The perception or the understanding of this is intelligence. It is this intelligence that puts away all the combinations of sorrow, violence and strife. It is like seeing a danger. Then there is instant action – not the action of will

which is the product of thought. Thought is not intelligence. Intelligence can use thought, but when thought tries to capture intelligence for its own uses, then it becomes cunning, mischievous and destructive' (Krishnamurti, 1991 p.18-19).

Comparing upstream first person research with downstream first person research, the work that I do in organisations has not been integrated with this new form of knowledge.

I think that my response to the question, 'Who am I?' can be compared to the active patterning of fractals, causing the knot to become smaller and subtler as fractals emanating from the knot are magnified by the 'I' of consciousness.

'Iteration launches a system on a journey that visits both chaos and order. The most beautiful consequences of iteration are found in the artistry of fractals. ... Fractals are everywhere around us, in the patterns by which nature organises clouds, rivers, mountains, many plants, tribal villages, our brains, lungs, circulatory systems. All of these (and millions more) are fractal, replicating a dominant pattern at several smaller levels of scale. We live in a universe of fractal forms...' (Wheatley, 1999 pp.123-124).

Each time I interrupt the same pattern of behaviour, the interruption imperceptibly alters my consciousness and my relation with the world. With each replication of the change in patterning comes the new possibility of a shift in perception. With each shift in perception comes the possibility of a change in behaviour. The fluctuations of consciousness become less chaotic and more discernible.

Action research shares with spiritual practice the question, 'Who am I?' In Hinduism that inquiry is made in order to bring into focus the actions, speech, intentions and qualities that the student brings to the world. It is a way of seeing (standing aside from) unthinking unconscious behaviours and attitudes.

In action research the researcher asks the question, 'Who am I?' in order to know who is carrying out the research, to bring to awareness the values, mental frames, modes of behaviour that s/he brings to the research.

Action research starts from the premise that we know more than we think we know, and as a way of delving deeper the question is often asked, 'Who or what inspires you?' In Hinduism that question is similar, but phrased differently within



a mental frame that assumes inspiration emanates from a loving divinity (as a pre-existent form) and inspiration arises as part of the process of loving that begins with the teacher (guru) and becomes complete in the divine. So the meaning of the Hindu question 'Who am I?' shows me my level of consciousness and what I need to change, and my action research question shows me the differences between my espoused values and how I put them into action. (Schon, 1995)

## PART TWO: LIVED EXPERIENCE

### CHAPTER SIX

#### EMBODIED KNOWING

*This chapter makes connections between my practise of the Eight Limbs of Yoga and my role as a teacher of yoga. I wrote this Chapter as I came to the end of my inquiry in order to explain (1) the influence of spiritual practice on how I learn and (2) how I enact my embodied knowledge.*

*I show how my ontology influences my action through the ordering principle of silence, and in a further iteration I begin to develop my (e)pistemology. Through my reflective writing I bring my propositional knowledge back into action and provide a case example that demonstrates how I enact and transmit my embodied knowledge.*

*The paragraphs in italics continue to signpost the reader, particularly in relation to my theory frame in Part One. The form of my inquiry is as described in Chapter Four, with an action account followed by two pieces of reflective writing, followed by further account of how this then informed my action.*

#### ACTION ACCOUNT

##### Practising and learning yoga postures

My body is still learning new yoga postures. Understanding the headstand (*Salamba Sirsana*) is my most recent success. For years I did this posture with desperation, thinking 'I can't stay upside down for much longer, my neck hurts, my arms are not strong enough, I am too old, too heavy...'. Then I got so exasperated by all the frustration of not being able to do it, and decided that to do a five-minute headstand was absolutely necessary NOW. So I determined to do supported *Salamba Sirsana* for 5 minutes every day for 5 days, and to stay in the posture WHATEVER happened.

I found that the only way I could achieve this was to daydream upside down! Pretend I was on a beach or floating about in a cloud. I couldn't THINK about where I was or how to improve.

On the second day my neck started to adjust itself. It began to extend downwards so that my head pressed into the floor, and as that happened my shoulders started to rise. I thought - 'Oh, this is what they said was supposed to happen, the body is doing it by itself!' - and the next day it happened again. It's a really great posture and now I look forward to it!

So now I know what *Salamba Sirsasana* is supposed to feel like, now I understand it, now I can surrender to it, and soon I will be able to start working in it. That's how I learn in yoga and it's a mixture of theory (I have read about it) and the body doing it (lots of practise but no success) and then when the time is right, the learning just sort of happens.

One of the ways that I practise is shown in the photograph on page 20.

I am altering my perspective by turning my world upside down (Journal January 2001)

## THE FIRST ITERATION: REFLECTION

### Contemplating the links between body and mind

*Here I connect my sensuous knowing with Hindu spiritual practice. I refer to the Eight Limbs of Yoga in Chapters Seven and Eight, so the reader may find this exposition useful as a later reference. I explain how my way of learning has been structured by my practice, framed by Bernstein's ideas (Bernstein, 2000) described in Chapter Two. This way of realising and absorbing learning is central to the way that I apply the 'ordering principles of language' and the 'ordering principle of silence'.*

Knowing where my body is through the inner eye, the 'third eye', increases the capacity of my mind. It is a pleasurable opening. Noticing this and then writing about it opens up my learning. Rosemarie Anderson puts her experience of this into words.

'In my own experience, both as a scientist and a contemplative, I am connected to what I know through the very core of my body, mind and self. I think thoughts and create ideas through sharing with others, as though a collective field of reasoning and imagining is created. I see and feel knowledge viscerally, as though sculpting it with the force of my senses. I move it, and the 'sense-scape' of the movements informs my knowing, shaping and reshaping it in a field of kinaesthetic perception. My thoughts connect to those of others: I work in collaboration even when I am working at home alone' (Anderson 2000 p. 11).

I, too, learn, collaborate and remember through my body. It is through my body that I experience the ground of my being. If new knowledge does not get incorporated into my sensed being, it is lost.

My knowledge and my learning process arise from the raw material of my sensuous body. Speech arises in response to felt shifts in embodiment. I trust the dissonance and resonance of my sensuous knowing.

Writing is subtle work, work that requires me to notice the relation of the mind and body. Because I want this writing to be 'true' in the sense that it is aligned with the way I live in the world, it is a watching, reflexive process. I make sense by allowing myself to be influenced by my reading, by the ideas of others in 'a

collective field of reasoning and imagining' (see above). I pull these ideas together and let them influence my thinking.

The act of writing must feel authentic. And as I reread my writing, the words must resonate with my embodied knowing.

### **The Eight Limbs of Yoga**

The **3<sup>rd</sup> Limb** is *asana*, learning control of the body through postures. 'Learning control' is a critical phrase. It does not mean the brain instructing the body, verbally saying 'do this, do that' and the body obeying. It means letting the body show me what it can do. This is my experience of learning headstand. I prepared myself by reading and copying others. But that only gave me information. I had performed the *asana* many times, but only for a few seconds because it was so uncomfortable. Now, because I was working through the body, I could stay in the posture for very much longer. Learning headstand meant using my will and the information I had amassed, then allowing the body to just 'do it'. I learned control of the body, to work with the body so that it became free to move into the posture that it 'knew' how to do anyway! I stopped performing headstand from the 'outside' and learned its real meaning from the 'inside'. In this way the body becomes the instrument of the headstand.

This methodology can be applied to the practise of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Limbs of yoga and is a metaphor for the way I write about love in organisation. Becoming an instrument of love is like becoming an instrument of the body doing headstand. It is not about taking in information and applying it 'out there', neither is it about performance, it is about letting knowledge of love held 'in here' work in its own way.

The **4<sup>th</sup> Limb** is *prajnyama*, learning control of the breath. This draws me to work with ideas about power and control. Do I breathe, or does the breath breathe me, and if it is the latter, then do I control the breath to inhale and exhale differently? Learning to work with the breath, not instructing it to change through language, but by becoming part of the breath and altering it from 'inside'. I find that when the breath moves into new places in the body, my thoughts change.

The breath contains subtle energy. How does the breath breathe love? Responding to this question gave me an intuitive sense of how eros and agape might be carried in the inhalation and exhalation. I begin to get 'inside' the hermeneutical and phenomenological experience of eros and agape.

Practising the 5<sup>th</sup> Limb is *pratyahara*, turns the senses inwards, brings the centrifugal movement of the senses that naturally move outwards into an inward centripetal movement. I learn how not to act outwardly towards the object of desire. Reflecting on my actions as a leader, I find that being a good leader means developing a deeper understanding of the nature of how erotic passion is enacted.

Desire does not have a permeable boundary; it excludes all thoughts that do not align with it. I know that because strong feelings take over my body and my thoughts. If I am to be an instrument of love, then I must learn to cultivate joyfulness when not feeling joyful. By controlling my desire my mind moves more easily into different mode of being, unwilling but willingly, I practise *pratyahara* and using my will and my sense memory of love, to take up a different more joyful form.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Limb is *dharana*, stilling the mind. I practise looking at the action of the mind as it contemplates an object. This is *Dharana* 'concentration', becoming engrossed in an object, a flower or candle flame to the exclusion of everything else.

This is the practise of silence; a state of stillness in thought and feeling, that opens to the possibility that the mind can be released and witnessed like any other organ. Learning to focus the mind. In stillness there is no desire and no relationship. There is space, nothing else. This is where the ordering principle of silence influences my (o)ntology. This is where the unrealised is realised.

In this silence, I have no desires and no longer have a sense of self. I recognise what is happening because it is a similar process to changing the shape of the body (*asana*) working with the breath (*prajnyama*) and controlling desire (*pratyahara*). The practise of *dharana* lies at the edge of socially constructed reality. It becomes increasingly difficult, but just possible, to point to a practical

application. *Dharana* teaches me to notice the fluctuating nature of consciousness. Extending this understanding of the dynamic nature of consciousness, I begin to sense the fluctuating 'flow' in relationships. Here I imagine that there is a way of bringing 'presence'<sup>1</sup> into that flow.

Altering the mindset is a long process of learning to 'give up', to surrender the self. Ideas about changing individual personality tend to be deeply resisted by most non-religious Westerners, but it is contained in Christianity as well as the Eastern traditions. In Christianity it is described thus:

'When I look on the world as something focussing on me, when I look on God as something functioning usefully in my philosophy, then I am imprisoned in myself, and I cannot give or receive true and compassionate love. When God in this terrible darkness breaks through, he begins to displace and destroy that dominating manipulating self; then he sets me free to be loved and to give myself to him and to my brothers and sisters' (Williams, 1994 p.99).

In seeking communion with God we must let ourselves be made by God, 'because we can't complete ourselves' (Williams, 1994 p.153).

In Hinduism, submission to the will of the guru is a practice for this collapse of the self into the Self. I could not even contemplate this without, at the same time, holding the sensation of fostering growth secure within my embodied knowing. This nurturing is my vehicle for giving up the self, for becoming a universal lover, the lover of everything.

To give an example of what I mean by submission, I have drawn my interpretation of a talk given by my meditation teacher. It is entitled 'The Practices of Love' and is on page 19.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Limb is *dhyana*, where the steady flow of concentrated mind is uninterrupted. Imagining this gives me the sensation of flow, of plasticity, of dissolving the mind and body.

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<sup>1</sup> This is covered in Chapter Ten

Changing the self is analogous to the body becoming like a mountain or the synaesthesia of making music or dissolving into the sense of the sublime, so the mind that I use on an everyday basis dissolves into a spark of the Universe and thus becomes the Universe itself. Then I have no needs or desires, and from that space I am in love with the whole world and the world loves me. I am the world.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Limb is *samadhi*, union with the Divine, the Higher Realms. Beyond any imagination and inexpressible.



## THE SECOND ITERATION: REFLECTION

### **Contemplating the relation of yoga to my developing (e)pistemology**

*In this section I am concerned with the inward facets of 'beingness', which is framed by Bortoft's (1996) theory of holistic consciousness. I show how I connect being with doing through embodied sensing. I show how I identify and alter habitual patterns in the body, and I make a link between numbness in the body and Bernstein's (2000) unthinkable, automatic thought.*

*As I reflect on this I begin to realise how the practice of silence acts as an empowering experience because it opens up my choices.*

It is my phenomenological discernment of movement in the inner body, which enables me to discriminate between the feeling and thinking. It is this movement that shows me the 'facts', the structures of my (o) ntology. Realising the interrelatedness of these structures, feeling the resonance and dissonance, shows me the gaps in my knowing. It is in the gaps created by dissonance that my knowledge forms and it is the harmony of resonance that indicates the direction of my actions and thoughts. My aim is to seek a harmonious relation between (o) ntology and (e) pistemology<sup>2</sup>.

The opening up of the spaces in the physical body releases habitual patterns and this reorders my thoughts. In the physical body the *asanas* identify the numb areas and bring into my awareness the previously unnoticed. In this way, yoga develops my discriminative capacity.

Practising the 3<sup>rd</sup> Limb of yoga shows me my intention and my attitude. The *asanas* are repeated over and over again, one day I will want to do them and other times I won't. Any resistance to practice, and the honesty with which I apply myself, repeats itself and is echoed in what my body will and will not do. I am more flexible than I am strong. I resist holding the postures long enough to get stronger. There are an infinite number of opportunities for noticing my imprisonment, as the actions of the mind are reflected in the body.

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<sup>2</sup> Following Thayer-Bacon (2003) I continue to refer to my unique ontological experience as (o)ntology, and my theory of knowing as (e)pistemology, to differentiate this from any assumption of a universalising tendency.

The willingness of the body to surrender to the yoga posture signals the willingness of the mind to surrender. By acting into surrender in the *asana* I notice what I do and do not do, and the difference (the gap) between surrendering and not surrendering tells me what I need to learn. The ease with which the *asana* does itself shows me its value.

These physical exercises show me how my body 'belongs with' the mind. It shows me how the behaviour of the mind is shown through the action of the body. I make decisions by noticing my bodily responses. Noticing the resonances, I follow their direction and try to act in unison with this sensuous awareness. If I can keep an inner / outer awareness then I can follow the inner sensing into the outer action. I can tell whether I have been 'true' to that initial intention by the direction that the next movement takes me to, the next iteration of the flow. This is how I assess whether my action is 'good' enough, whether my inner logic has been integrated into my outer actions. This is a process of realisation, a process of 'seeing' and is non-verbal.

What I describe here is my way of relating being to action and the relation of action to knowing. I take the experiential into the practical, and then into the propositional. It is through action, whether in the *asanas* or in organisation, that my knowing becomes articulated. It is through reflection that I bring that knowledge back into being...and so on.

The gap through which I learn is not entered through language but through embodied knowing, however I find a similar configuration between learning through thinking; and learning through embodied knowledge. I can compare the relation between the felt and unfelt areas of both the body and mind with Bernstein's 'forms of knowledge' (Bernstein, 2000 p. 31). He distinguishes between the thinkable (that which is abstract thought) and the unthinkable (that which is automatic and unnoticed). I make the same comparison between responsive (that which I can work with) and numb (those parts that I cannot move or feel) areas of the body.

The discursive gap between the thinkable and the unthinkable for Bernstein is subject to control by those in power. Similarly, I see power relations occurring within the gaps between the felt and the unfelt in the inner structures of being. The movements described in the previous chapter, between feeling and thinking,

between the body and thought, are movements of energy that have their own power relations. Meditation and spiritual practices uncover these habitual power relations that inevitably focus my way of seeing the world.

When the inner power relations hold sway over my consciousness, the dissonant movements become the inner battles that are so uncomfortable. This is what is happening inside when I scream and cry; 'I have no choice!' Then the disciplines of spiritual practice and action research, my unique combination of discipline and action research method, takes over and I eventually find a space in which I can see and make choices.

I realise that the cessation of the movement between the structures of my (o)ntology is what I mean by 'silence'.

Silence arises from stillness, an absence of internal movement, and an absence of power- relation. It is this experience that allows me a glimpse of divine love. Here there is no compulsion, no inner or outer movement; here there is plenty of space and choice. This is where I 'know' my (o)ntology and (e)pistemology. Moments of coalescence (Bortroft, 1996) occur in that silence, where the parts that I usually experience as separate become whole. This is the effect of the ordering principle of silence, achieved through the transformative nature of love. Love dissolves the boundaries between being and doing, silence discloses the whole, and I become the space.

The transforming energy of love bridges the gap between the known and the unknown and brings the separating parts into a 'belonging' relation'. Love and knowledge are no longer separate. Learning in this way I make no distinction between feeling, thinking or doing. In this way love takes me to the source of my embodied knowledge.

## THE THIRD ITERATION: REFLECTION INTO ACTION

### **At the boundaries of the inner and outer world**

*Here I bring my inner knowing outwards using Bernstein's pedagogic theory (Bernstein, 2000). I provide an example of how I transmit my embodied knowledge teaching yoga, and show how I make use of, and apply Bernstein's pedagogical categories. In these examples I show how I seek to teach students how to become an instrument of their own unique embodied knowledge using Bernstein's theory of explicit, implicit and tacit pedagogy.*

*I apply this concept of tacit pedagogy later in my inquiry as I develop my ideas about a pedagogy of presence.*

Understanding the relation of (o)ntology to (e)pistemology is part of a process which is mediated by my action-in-the-world.

The relevance of my actions defines my place in the social world, and this mediates my understanding of relationship and love. Arendt pointed up the importance of maintaining an inner/outer balance, in relation to Heidegger and his support of the Nazi regime (in Coulter and Wiens, 2002):

'Good judgement for Arendt is not a matter of objective knowledge or of subjective opinion, but the result of intersubjectivity; becoming a good judge depends largely on one's capacity to consider other viewpoints of the same experience. ... Such judging involves accepting responsibility for travelling to all relevant viewpoints, ... and attending to those perspectives' (Coulter and Wiens, 2002 pp.17-18).

Whilst the logic and direction of my action is determined by my inner resonances, those inner meanings are subject to constant revision. My reflection on action includes a consideration of how others might construe my actions. This is how my reflection alters my perception and my action.

### **Explicit pedagogy<sup>3</sup>**

I know yoga postures very well. I do not speak to my students; I speak to the postures, noticing resistances and abilities in my students, talking in order to bring a more detailed awareness of what the posture is asking.

I use language to give instructions, I demonstrate the *asanas* to provide a visual picture and I touch the student bodies to give more of a feel for the shape and movement in the posture.

I move students' bodies after I have given a verbal instruction. Touching comes naturally to me. It is a way of expressing mutuality through the body and is complementary to the skills of language and demonstration.

I can feel the resistance when students do not like to be touched. I distinguish between fear of touch and fear of falling in the student. It is not desire that is expressed in this touch, it is agape, the connection of one body with another, changing the relational space between student and teacher. If the student responds to the touch, they learn more about the posture because they get the 'feel' of the movement in the body. When they say 'Aha!' I know they have received an understanding what the *asana* is teaching.

### **Implicit pedagogy**

My purpose in teaching is to develop the embodied knowledge of my students, to increase their awareness of the relation between the mind and the landscape of the inner body.

When I experience a problem I inquire using Whitehead's form, asking 'How can I improve my teaching in this class?' (Whitehead, 2004b).

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<sup>3</sup> Here I rely on Bernstein's definitions of explicit, implicit and tacit pedagogy. 'Explicit and implicit refer to a ... a purposeful intention to initiate, modify, develop or change knowledge, conduct or practice. ... Tacit is a pedagogic relation where initiation, modification, development or change of knowledge, conduct or practice occurs, where neither of the members may be aware of it.' (Bernstein, 2000 p. 200)

This example demonstrates what I mean as I journal my concerns about a particular class:

### **CASE EXAMPLE TWO: Transmitting Embodied Knowledge**

Mary and Jackie are difficult to teach, they say that they feel old and are reluctant to move, so I teach them gently. I am not always gentle, sometimes I have just had enough, and I work them hard and don't leave them enough breath to complain.

Yesterday they were having trouble with twists, falling out of the postures and giggling a lot, encouraging each other not to concentrate. We had the chairs out, so I did *Marychasana 1* (sitting and standing) using a chair against the wall, and that helped them to get a feel of how the hips should work and how the spine twists from its base.

'Oh Yes' said Mary, 'I see', she said as I pushed her hips against the wall. I thought, 'Does she REALLY see?' I hope that she does because she needs to feel where her hips are - she has problems on the right side of her spine from the waist to the neck.

If she could feel the difference when her hips were straight, she would be able to stretch out the strain and prevent the stress headaches. I am not convinced that her body will remember that 'correct' way of working - I will wait and see and remind her of that feeling in her hips next time we do lateral extensions.

**i) I am experiencing two concerns:** Mary's understanding of how her hips work, and Mary and Jackie giggling and falling about.

**ii) I imagine solutions:** Firstly, I decided to teach lateral extensions a particular way and hope that Mary's 'Aha' would result in a sustained understanding of the movement of the hips in these *asanas*.

The second concern was more serious. These two women have responsible jobs. I teach them at the end of a working day. I think that they enjoy the release of not having to think any more, of being a bit silly. Nothing wrong with that, except that this mode of being is not generative or conducive to learning. I decide to teach more firmly, with more authority.

**iii) I act in the direction of these solutions:** I ask Mary questions about how 'things' feel in the lateral extensions. She begins to try out her own solutions. To reduce her discomfort, she discovers that she should keep the extension of the spine going forward rather than lift the spine vertically. This is a step forward.

In terms of class behaviour, in teaching more 'strictly' I end up sounding irritable and cross, which of course I am!

**iv) I evaluate the outcome of my actions:** Mary continues to be puzzled by the relation of her hips to the rest of her body. She recognises that she needs greater awareness of what is going on, but still cannot connect with her hips. She has started going to the gym and her legs are stronger. This has given her better understanding of the extent of the hip problem, which I think is potentially quite serious.

Teaching with personal authority, rather than teaching through the postures becomes very tiring. Mary and Jackie pay more attention, but it feels like I do the postures with three times more effort, that I am doing the postures for the two of them as well! The learning is being lost in my effort to keep the class together.

**v) I modify my ideas and actions in the light of evaluations:** I consider cancelling the class. In view of my student's lack of progress I must consider my capacity as a teacher. My aim, which is to pass on implicit knowledge of control of the body, is getting nowhere.

Mary's postures are improving, and she could go further but her lack of awareness in the hips continues. Jackie is very stiff and has to be reminded of the simplest

instructions every week. My ability to teach them more than they have already learned seems limited.

I decide to be challenging.

I say, 'I have been asking you to bring your left leg in line with your right leg every week for the last 5 years, and you are still doing it. I should not have to remind you!'

I ask Mary what is wrong with Jackie's posture, and ask Jackie for her opinion about Mary's.

It feels to me like putting them through an exam every week. I do not like doing this; I would hate to be taught like this. I think that it goes against all the principles of yoga. However, they respond by becoming more sensible, more responsible for their own postures.

I feel less burdened. If this is what it takes to get them to develop their embodied knowledge, I will continue with this - for the moment at least!

By teaching this way, I finally stopped being the source of their embodied knowledge! I think that these students have not yet 'internalised' what they know, but by learning to share their understanding with each other, they have taken one step away from an over reliance on the teacher and taken one step nearer to their inner teacher.

I decide to check out my assumptions about what my students thought they had learned. I sent them my original journal entry and asked them to email me their responses to the following question:

**'How has your understanding of the yoga postures altered over the years?'**

**Mary said:**



'My first thought on reading your journal entry from 4 years ago was "oh dear - I don't seem to have made much progress in all that time!" I have to admit that I still find it difficult to get my body to respond to instructions and I still don't always know when, for instance, my hips are not level or I'm not lying straight on my mat. On the other hand, there are some postures that I feel I understand better now, even if I don't always manage to do them as well as I should. For example, I feel more confident about my ability to e.g. stand in *tadasana* or *trikonasana*. I think I have found ways of moving my body in the right direction in response to Eleanor's instructions, since she does now sometimes say, "yes, that's good"!

I've always felt more comfortable with the sitting postures and I think I have finally learned how to twist round without letting my head lead the process.

One of the best things to come out of the yoga classes, and one of the main reasons for keeping on with them, is that I now no longer suffer from the regular headaches that I used to have and which (I am now quite sure) derived from the problems with my right hip. So something must have worked!

Yoga is something I look forward to every week and miss when we can't do it - and it certainly makes me feel a lot better, both mentally and physically.'

**Jackie said:**

'Through yoga I have discovered just how difficult it is for me to have an accurate idea of the position of my body when I am asked to take up positions. For example, when I am asked to lie straight, I usually lie crookedly. In my head I am straight but in reality I am anything but.

I am also more aware of the way I stand, how I hold my body. My deportment has always been poor (not standing up straight, rounded shoulders, resulting in a rounded back).

Yoga has made me more aware of the need to reposition my body to improve my deportment. and how to avoid the physical problems that can arise from standing and sitting badly.'

(Private email communications, September 2005)

Mary is more aware of the inner body, but does not work with that knowledge. Jackie's knowledge is concerned with observing her performance of the postures. I think that this feedback indicates my assessment of their learning was reasonably accurate.

### **Tacit pedagogy**

The tacit pedagogic relation occurs when the parties are not explicitly aware of pedagogic transmission, and I think it is this form of pedagogy that assists in the re-ordering of knowledge through silence.

The final posture at the end of every yoga class is 'corpse' pose, relaxation, attempting to lie still, flat in the floor. It is very difficult to be still.

Many teachers say very little or nothing during this *asana*. I do it differently, and take the students through forms of progressive relaxation. Every class varies, and I do not plan what I say. I encourage a letting go of the body, awareness of the breath, awareness of feeling, awareness of thought, and I encourage watching, witnessing and letting all these movements pass like clouds in the sky. It is a preparation for meditation, but I do not explicitly say this.

Some people fall asleep; some wriggle or get a tickle in the throat. These are the outer signs. I do not know what is going on with each person. I take responsibility for creating an intimate space; I want to pass on a sense of what I understand about the ordering principle of silence. I do not seek to impose my understanding, but to pass on a route map to where silence lies in the inner body.

I call this tacit pedagogy, because it is not conscious transmission rather it is an intention to transmit a way of coming into stillness. I have a sense of love and

care as I utter the words. It is my way of giving the participants in the class permission to be as they are in that moment.

### **Evaluating explicit, implicit and tacit pedagogy in teaching embodied knowledge**

I asked for feedback from the students attending the class held weekly in the village hall. These are the answers to the question, 'Do you have any comments on the way the yoga is taught?'

- I particularly like the way Eleanor teaches, with the corrections of postures – she has a great balance between being a schoolmistress and making it fun.
- Eleanor is patient with us all and doesn't waste time, which I like
- The poses are taught in a precise way which suits me well, with plenty of supervision
- I appreciate the encouraging way you teach – no pressure to achieve, but of course we all want to!
- I like the weekly variation of positions taught, and that we can occasionally veer off at a tangent.
- Very professionally and it is very reassuring to know you remember the various limitations of the class in relation to injuries
- Its been good to go slowly building up to doing more complicated postures

This feedback indicates my explicit pedagogy 'The poses are taught in a precise way'.

The acquirers go on to acknowledge implicit pedagogy 'I appreciate the encouraging way you teach'.

In terms of tacit pedagogical relations, I suggest that this is discernible through the students continuing interest in relaxation and meditation, and evidenced by 70% of respondents indicating that they would be interested in relaxation classes.

### Summary

Standing on my head, learning to do the postures upside down, helps me to reframe my thinking.

Developing this capacity to reframe is a critical component of my inquiry. My first standard of judgement against which I ask this thesis and my practice to be judged, states:

- I aim to recontextualise (reframe) what I am, and we are doing now; so that our joint work can become easier and more pleasurable.

Learning to alter the shape of the body helps me to alter my mindset, helps me to see what you 'the other' means, helps us to understand each other, helps to make our joint work more pleasurable.

My second standard to concerned with organisational practices and is not relevant here.

My third standard of judgement is:

- I aim to bring a resonance, a flavour of harmony linking the practical and invisible spaces in which we participate.

This 'flavour of harmony' relates to the ordering principle of silence. Sometimes it is possible to share a non-verbalised uplifting sense of a common shared humanity in the most prosaic of circumstances. I write about this further in Chapter Ten. I refer to this standard of judgement here because I maintain that the capacity to envisage harmony beyond contradiction is a skill that I have learned (and renew) through disciplined daily spiritual practice. The skill of seeing harmony in all things does not mean ignoring difference, it means constantly and iteratively inquiring into the paradoxical nature of what it is to be human. I considered the nature of contradiction in detail in Chapter Two in my discussion of the philosophy of Kant and Hegel.

## PART THREE: PRACTICE

### CHAPTER SEVEN

#### EROS AND ORGANISATION

*In this Chapter, my methodology as set out in Chapter Four is used. I give an account of practice, and then reflect on this in three iterations of reflective writing.*

*My reflective writing holds an embodied sense of the erotic as I make connections between eros, idealism, wholeness, and the dynamic of pleasure arising from contradiction.*

*I address my concerns with Torbert's Leadership Development Framework (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert, 2000) in this Chapter.*

*The reader should note that these writings create the data from which my findings are drawn, and I provide a summary at the end of the Chapter.*

#### ACTION ACCOUNT: LEADERSHIP PRACTICE IN WHHA

##### Setting the scene

With the exception of temporary holiday jobs, I have always worked in the public sector or in a voluntary organisation. Most of my career has been in the social housing sector. With increasing central government intervention in local government, which started in the mid-1980's and has continued almost unabated since, the institutional structures and the aims of social housing has been shaped by public policy.

With the introduction of private sector funding to supplement the government's capital grants for developing new housing in 1985, the housing association movement began to develop new housing, a role that had traditionally been that of the local authority. As a consequence housing associations expanded. In the year 2000, when I began my inquiry, there were 200 developing associations in the Greater London area competing for funding, sites and development opportunities.

The professional 'trade' body was (and is) the National Housing Federation (NHF). The London Housing Federation (LHF) lobby's on behalf of its members within the NHF, and also with local authorities and with the Housing Corporation (HC). This latter organisation is the government quango responsible for regulation and funding of the housing association sector. It was in this context that I learned about the pleasures and risks of organisations co-operating and competing at the same time.

The housing association movement is a rich mixture of institutions and key players. These individuals included those working for the Housing Corporation (HC). Although the HC was the regulatory body, the administrators that made crucial funding decisions were often from a local housing authority background, sometimes even from a Housing Association, and we all knew each other. There was a need to make good personal relationships, and at the same time they (and we) had to keep many organisational and London-wide issues confidential. It was a stimulating, dynamic environment.

WHHA, the housing association in which I was working, operated in 15 London Boroughs providing mainly temporary housing for homeless people (usually families), many of whom were seeking asylum in the UK. We provided housing from leased furnished privately owned property. The Association entered into informal contracts with local authorities to procure x number of properties, and then we would go out to lease the required number of homes. We were an organisation focussed on our competitive environment and looking for development opportunities.

I was employed at WHHA for 14 years firstly as Deputy Chief Executive and Development Director and later as Operations Director responsible for both Development and Housing Management Departments.

### **Developing Software**

The source of our housing was different from the mainstream, which meant that WHHA's business processes were very different from the industry standard. That meant that we either had to amend the standard software packages, which was

expensive, or develop bespoke software, which though also expensive, would give us a competitive 'edge' in the market.

Following the successful introduction of spreadsheets and the appointment of more computer literate staff, I wanted to explore the possibility of developing bespoke software for the shortlife development department. Some staff were very supportive, and others were resistant.

I decided that we could work around staff resistance, whilst also co-ordinating and managing unrealistic expectations, by bringing in a consultant I had worked with before on another project. He was already familiar with WHHA's development projects (and the people involved) reasonably well, and he also understood the way I worked. We worked together well.

I set up a staff consulting group, which had monthly meetings chaired by the consultant. Over a nine month period, we developed a manual system, which provided the template for new software linking three different functions within the department.

Meanwhile, the finance department had appointed another consultant to assist with housekeeping the property databases in finance. As a consequence of his position, he had become familiar with the manual systems operating between the Finance and Development Departments. He was a sensible chap, who could keep his focus in spite of pressure from excitable staff, and he was in an ideal position to check the proposed software against the existing informal office practices. So, this second consultant checked the developing software against the systems analysis, then trained the staff, and then checked the use and the bugs in the system during the early stages of the software implementation.

The new IT system worked well even though some staff were determined to remain computer virgins. I was proud of our achievement and the software became a useful reporting and management tool.

It was this experience that provided the basis for further introductions of bespoke IT software into other departments.



### **Leading the next cycle of implementation**

Here I describe a similar process of leading when we introduced an integrated organisation wide computer system.

Examining the interrelationship between the Information Systems and organisational structure in order to write new software inevitably brought about both major and small order changes to procedures and staff roles. The IT was technically demanding, and required a detailed understanding of the needs of the users and no interruption to the delivery of services. However, the prospect of bringing together the IT system and improved housing services to tenants and landlords in an appropriate way for the organisation would improve internal communication and our services to tenants.

It was a multi-dimensional experience of leading and managing complex change. It was not possible to plan the detail and forecast changes and outcomes over the life of the project. As a leader I could not provide a meta-narrative that would plot direction at every stage. Providing a detailed plan, a meta-narrative, would have hindered rather than helped us because it would have provided certainty where there was none.

The implementation of the software, the development of specifications and functionality, combined with changing staff structures made sense on a local departmental and team basis. I was able to work in this way because managers were willing to trust my initial decisions, to trust the process, the functionality of software and the capability of staff.

Throughout the implementation I had a sense of 'holding' the system and the new structure in my imagination. If my sense of working towards the new structure was diminished, then I took remedial action. This 'holding' seemed to be linked to the quality and level of trust needed to 'make the wheels go round'. When this intuitive sense of holding was broken (as it inevitably was), then I put attention on reaffirming the value of what we were aiming for and reminding staff of the success we had achieved to date.

I would 'check' the expected outcomes of the local decision making, asking two questions, 'Will this fit within the organisation as it is developing, both in terms of the Business Plan and the culture?' And secondly, 'How will the decision I make here in this team affect our goals, the Business Plan and the culture?'

## THE FIRST ITERATION: REFLECTION

### The embodied resonances of eros

I experience the urge to develop the new bespoke IT software as a centripetal action, moving towards the aim or the object out there. If I move outwards too fast, too slow or with too much force, or if there is a force of movement coming back that feels uncomfortable, then the returning action must be reflected upon so that I can decide on the wisdom of the action. This reflection is the centrifugal inward movement, which has been stimulated from an external source.

So, it is this dynamic between the centripetal and centrifugal movements of the body that is at the core of my decision making and my leadership activity, and in a phenomenological sense, I see this movement embodied in the inhalation and exhalation of the breath.

In Hinduism the breath contains *prajna*, the vital energy that is within all living and material bodies. If I watch the breath as it comes in and leaves the body, the breath can be seen to have a natural intelligence of its own, that breathing gives the body life, that the body is controlled by the breath, that I do not choose to breathe. If I do not choose to breathe then the breath chooses to breathe me. The 4<sup>th</sup> Limb of yoga, is concerned with this, learning not only how to control the breathing but to work with the breath, moderate it, mediate it as if it is a separate living intelligent aspect of the body. I do this knowing that the subtle movements of the breath provide a capacity to alter the thought patterns of the brain, and give me the opportunity to think differently, to understand and then extend my logic.

Reflecting on this action account, I relate to the inhalation, the breath that brings the energy for action, that focuses on searching for satiation, for wholeness, for completeness. That search for wholeness enables me to focus on achieving the project aim.

So through the awareness of the breath, becoming aware of action and reaction of the cyclical dynamical nature of pleasure, I feel the movement of a force that

can be either empowering or disempowering. My initial experience of divine love allowed me to withstand the force of the disempowering feelings, to discriminate between these fluctuations of consciousness and to use the energy of the flux to reach my goals.

### **Moving towards wholeness - Idealism and Vision in Organisation**

I think that there are many people who like me hoped that it might be possible to create a new society, to take part in a redistribution of wealth by working in the public sector. These were rather lazy assumptions, thinking that just by being in local government I contributed to a more egalitarian society. And I think that this kind of individual commitment does attract certain people to apply for jobs in the government administration, and is a factor that still forms the cultural basis of some housing associations today.

When I moved to WHHA I found an organisation that turned empty property, often pigeon infested and uninhabitable, into nice bright clean temporary homes. It was delightful to be able to work towards tangible results that would directly help someone who was homeless. It made a change to be able to make a positive difference, rather than to be constantly saying 'no' and sending desperate homeless people back onto the street, as had been the case working previously in Lambeth Council's Housing Advice Centre.

It was this vision, 'Creating innovative solutions for homeless people', that motivated the Chief Executive and other Directors, as well as many members of the WHHA Board, the development departments and many middle managers within the organisation.

Creating new homes out of derelict properties for people with nowhere to live is what gave the organisation its original purpose and formed the basis of much of its publicity and promotional activities. As the organisation diversified, and became larger and more successful, its focus inevitably became more multifaceted, and the messages became more complex – and perhaps became diffused and thus less clear - but the original purpose always retained its capacity to inspire me.

So what is this passion, this idealism and how does it link to mundane organisational life? Apart from helping to get me out of bed in the morning I used idealism as a tool that had instrumental value so that envisioning idealistic outcomes could usefully produce not only co-operation between staff but also bring benefit to others. Mine were idealistic visions that assumed that joining up to the cause could bring about worthy and practical effects.

My way of being a leader combined excitement with pragmatism where I hoped that if we worked well together commitment to the vision would overcome conflict and achieve the goal. And this was founded on a deeper belief that there is a universal, if unknown, good and right purpose within the Cosmos. In Hegelian terms, my assumptions were (and are) that there is:

'A system of determinations of purely universal, impersonal and featureless thought in general...' (Ilyenkov, 1977 p.206).

And that human beings want to learn what this 'system of determinations' might be. Hegel based his reasoning on an assumption that human beings have this universal need to find unity, but

'With Hegel's decline there passed from the modern intellectual arena the last culturally powerful metaphysical system claiming the existence of a universal order accessible to human awareness' (Tarnas, 1999 p.383).

Hegel published 'Phenomenology of Mind' at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the start of the Industrial Revolution and 50 years before Darwin's 'Origin of the Species' was published in 1859. The separation between science and evolutionary theory on the one hand and religion on the other has developed considerably since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and now at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the meta-narrative has been left behind.

So, I go back to Hegel to understand the philosophical roots of my search for coherence, and trust that it might be possible, by going beyond conflict to find unity and wholeness. Hegel expresses this longing for God, for Utopia, which is also shared (some would say arises from) Eastern philosophy:

'In Hinduism we find some of the richest expressions of our erotic relationship to the world. In early Vedic hymns, the first stirrings of life are equated with that primal impulse of Eros. In the beginning there was the sacred self-existent one, Prajapati. Lonely, it created the world by splitting into that with which it could copulate. Pregnant with its own inner amplitude and tension, it gave birth to all phenomena, out of desire. Desire plays a creative, world manifesting role here, and its charge in Hinduism pulses onward into Krishna worship, where devotional songs, or *bhajans*, draw on the erotic yearnings of body and soul. Krishna evokes them to bring his devotees the bliss of union with the divine. As you sing your yearning for the sparkle of his eyes, the touch of his lips, the blue shade of his skin – like the thunderclouds that bring refreshment and fertility of the monsoon – the whole world takes on his beauty and the sweetness of his flesh. You feel yourself embraced in the primal erotic play of life' (Macy, 1991 p.8).

It is this erotic yearning for wholeness and unity that I think is being expressed in Hegel and in Hinduism, and if the management theorists are right (Senge, 1995 and Wheatley, 1999), we are increasingly expected to find this sense of wholeness in organisations and in working with each other.

### **Eros and Vision in WHHA**

Peter Senge describes the way that shared vision operates in corporate America today,

'A shared vision is not an idea. It is not even an important idea such as freedom. It is a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes further – if it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person – then it is no longer an abstraction. It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few if any forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision. ... When people truly share a vision they are connected, bound together by a common aspiration. Personal visions derive their power from an individual's deep caring for the vision. Shared visions derive their power from common caring. In fact we have come to believe that one of the reasons people seek to build shared visions is their desire to be connected in an important undertaking' (Senge, 1990 p.206).

And this is how I experienced passion whilst working in social housing agencies. WHHA really did make a difference to homeless people's lives, we knew this

partly by what tenants said to us in surveys and conversations, but also we could see that the quality of the housing was so much better than hostels and Bed and Breakfast hotels. Certainly those staff members whose job it was to design and rehabilitate empty properties could see the practical outcomes and certainly reinforced the message about the worth of what we were doing.

This is eros in action, pushing forward, combining emotion and thought, connecting with others and driving towards action. This is not thought thinking 'in-itself', but thought and feeling thinking 'for-itself', in its active form producing material, tangible outcomes, what Joanna Macy refers to as 'the erotic impulse to life' (Macy, 1991).

But eros produces reaction, and not all are collaborative responses. Those people who worked in the Finance department, who never (or very rarely) saw either the properties or the tenants were not motivated primarily by the desire to house the homeless, but rather a desire to get the records of income and expenditure correct. They were more conscious of how staff filled in (or did not fill in) the finance forms, or being pestered by contractors impatient for their payments. Similarly for staff working in Housing Management. They were managing homes that had been often been lived in for some time and were beginning to show serious signs of wear and tear, or dealing with neighbours where tenants had been causing nuisance or had trashed the properties. These staff could not share in the reinforcing nature of the 'good' that the organisation might achieve, and were more aware of the administrative problems that arose as a consequence of developing and managing temporary homes. So the tasks that had to be performed on a daily basis often obscured the vision.

Some management theorists see the shared vision as a substitute for religious ideals and consider work as a wonderful opportunity for practising those ideals (Biberman and Whitty, 2000). I think that there is confusion about this, generated by the greater emphasis on the 'softer' side of organisational relationships, on emotion in organisation, intuitive responses, and value driven goals, home/work balance and building workplace community. But talking about values / emotions / relationships at work does not necessarily lead to the workplace becoming more spiritual, or mean that managers might become 'spiritual guides' or that organisations have souls.

Although there may be a case for introducing spiritual values into the way we organise, any links between organisational power and spiritual power must be dangerously close to oppressive authority. I think that these (theoretical) views show very little understanding of the purpose of religious or spiritual practice, which I think is to develop our individual souls (do good to ourselves first), but they nevertheless demonstrate a benign but regressive wish to move back into a form of 19th century philanthropy, which ignores the wishes and reality of ordinary peoples' working lives.

In many urban areas housing organisations employ a wide range of people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Many of these staff do not 'buy in' easily to Western ways of thinking, acting or relating. Additionally, and depending on their age and lifestyle, staff members may have or make deeper and more satisfying connections outside the work environment. The vision and aims of the organisation was developed within a culture that is a white middle-aged middle class version of secular Christianity and seems a million miles away from the Nigerian administrator who (aggressively) keeps telling everyone that Africa is more than one country and explaining more than once that Nigeria has more than one tribe.

In a multicultural organisation, as WHHA was, the role, ideology and language of organisational leadership is unlikely to be received or understood in predictable ways because there are differing cultural constructions of self. Some newspaper articles that followed the invasion of Iraq in 2003 addressed these issues. These pieces highlighted interesting and diverse views about cultural differences and global interdependencies. Jonathan Raban wrote:

'Passionate ideologies are incurious by nature and have no time for obstructive details. ... The single most important thing that Wolfowitz (USA deputy secretary for defence) might have learned is that in Arabia, words like "self" "community" "brotherhood" and "nation" do not mean what he believes them to mean. ... The post-Enlightenment, post-Romantic self, with its autonomous subjective world, is a western construct, and quite different from the self as it is conceived in Islam' (Raban, 2003).

So management theorists' rhetoric dealing with the spiritual dimensions of vision and leadership are open to a serious and broader critique about respecting and



understanding the range of cultural interpretations, in addition to raising concern about misuse of organisational power.

But what does my erotic attachment to my vision mean for my leadership practice? I could be firm, and seen as an oppressive manager, but I also worked hard at encompassing as many paradoxical perspectives as possible – otherwise we could not work together to get there – and that diversity was often (but not always) part of the pleasure!

'There are two things desirable for fighting fundamentalists. The first is not to be one yourself...The second desirable thing is to know what fundamentalism is. ... Fundamentalism is the paranoid condition of those who do not see that roughness is not a defect of human existence, but what makes it work. ... Anti-fundamentalists are not people without passionate beliefs; they are people who number among their passionate beliefs the conviction that you have as much right to your opinion as they have' (Eagleton, 2003).

So, whilst I respond to theories about corporate spiritual practice with scepticism I think that perhaps in a society that emphasises freedom and choice, organisations may now be the only places left where people either co-operate willingly, do as they are told, or leave. Perhaps organisations have become more analogous to traditional religion in this way, where 'obedience' or 'duty' could be considered both desirable and necessary virtues, and which might be needed if you cannot get others to agree with you, or when disagreements happen. (I am thinking here, not so much of wage negotiations as co-operative team working and customer focussed service delivery).

### **On desire and contradiction**

As I write I begin to realise that eros not only drives me; but the centripetal power of eros pulls me towards it, it starts to call me home. This is the double action of the unseen presence, the paradoxical power of the vision. The focus of my desire, that vision is created by me and then traps me. The ideal, becomes a living echo developing its own qualities of attraction and magnetism and asking me for more, more, more. I no longer feel free, no longer have choice, I have become trapped by the objects of my desire. I understand this is a hermeneutic

aspect of 'interpolation', what Althusser (Althusser, 1985) refers to as the action that hails the citizen as the subject of the State's apparatus and structure, and in so doing creates the subject.

The question is 'Does the organisational mission and vision have the capacity to 'hail', to pull people from other cultures and other ethnic traditions, towards it?' Probably not, for the reasons given in the paragraphs above. The construction of the self and the way meaning is made through relationship, what makes sense, is so very different from culture to culture<sup>1</sup>. But that does not mean that staff are not affected by the processes and relationships that form the culture of organisations. For fundamentalists of any kind I guess that organisational experiences can confirm and harden beliefs and resistances, and much of what leadership is about is creating meanings and contexts that soften and reconcile mistakes and misunderstandings. At WHHA we had a Chief Executive who understood these dilemmas, and who gave her priority to this multi-layered sensemaking process within the organisation.

However, the shadow side of eros attempts to deny contradictory beliefs and values, in full flow it will not stop, either to alter its direction or to see or to listen, or to recognise diversity; and the result can then be both oppressive and unjust. There is no place for disagreement, and not much room for negotiation.

'Eros never rests. Incompleteness is his destiny, since he is defined by want. ... This love is no longer the love of our dreams, fulfilled and fulfilling, the love served up by romantic fiction; it is love as bounteous as suffering, a strange commingling of "joy and anguish" ... an insatiable, solitary love, always longing for what it loves, always yearning for its object; it is love as passion in its true sense, terrifying and rending passion that starves and tortures, elates and imprisons. How could it be otherwise? We desire only what we lack, what we do not have: how could we have what we desire? There are no happy loves, and this want of happiness is love itself' (Comte-Sponville, 2003 p.237).

Eros is always looking ahead, is concerned with acting in order to satiate desire, thinking that the end justifies the means.

This excerpt from my journal demonstrates how eros can be controlled:

### CASE EXAMPLE THREE: THE RISK APPRAISAL PANEL

A new Development Manager was appointed who was very keen on demonstrating that WHHA could be as smart as the private property developers for whom she had previously worked. She set up the scheme feasibility's that combined income from commercial rentals as well as from publicly funded social housing rents. She loved doing these entrepreneurial projects, and they were (and are) an essential part of inner city regeneration. However, I did not agree with her method of forecasting commercial rent levels, I felt that they were too optimistic and not based on basic scheme appraisal principles. Her desire to do the scheme blinded her to the risks.

I expected that the Finance Director would critique her actuarial creativity but he did not. I think that was because he admired the skill and the imagination that the Development Manager put into her projects, because he shared her excitement and vision for the future.

She wouldn't listen to me as her manager, she did not value my financial expertise, so I used the terms of reference and Risk Appraisal Panel procedures (a procedure that I had been instrumental in setting up some years previously) as a way of controlling her wilder project ambitions.

Duty will tame the beast of erotic behaviour, whilst justice provides the containment. Justice here refers to the social contract from which social practice is expected to flow, the conventions by which we live together and the power we accord to those in authority by living according to those rules and the laws of society.

'...in every case the laws are made by the ruling party in its own interest; ... By making these laws they define as "right" for their subjects whatever is for their own interest, and they call anyone who breaks them a "wrongdoer" and punish him accordingly. That is what I mean: in all states alike "right" has the same

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<sup>1</sup> The question I am asking can be also rephrased and represented in theoretical terms: 'Can the structures of (o)ntology be altered through organisational practices?'

meaning, namely what is for the interest of the party established in power, and that is the strongest. So the sound conclusion is that what is "right" is the same everywhere: the interest of the strongest party" (Plato, 1941 p.18).

Fulfilling one's duty, being obedient is commanded both by religious law and by the law of the state. What has this to do with love? In Hinduism *Karma Yoga* is the action of duty that brings the disciple to an understanding of *Bakhti Yoga*, devotion to God. Eros tamed by duty becomes devotion.

Similarly Ricoeur writes:

'There seems to be something scandalous about commanding love, that is, about ordering a feeling....the commandment to love springs from the bond of love between God and the individual soul. The commandment that precedes every law is the word that the lover addresses to the beloved...This unexpected distinction between commandment and law makes sense only if we admit that the commandment to love is love itself, commending itself, as though the genitive in the 'commandment of love' were subjective and objective at the same time' (Ricoeur 1996 pp.26-27).

Ricoeur goes on to say that this call to love which comes from the 'poetic imperative' covers a whole range of expressions from the amorous to 'the sharp command accompanied by the threat of punishment' (Ricoeur, 1996 p.27). I think that obligation and duty have similar configurations around the poetic imperative. In relationship, love may give rise to duty, and duty may also give rise to love.

However Ricoeur maintains that 'love enters the practice and ethical sphere through justice' (Ricoeur, 1996 p.37) and ultimately he says,

'..the highest point the ideal of justice can envision is that of a society in which the feeling of mutual dependence – even of mutual indebtedness – remains subordinate to the idea of mutual disinterest' (Ricoeur 1996 p.31).

But still I think that there is insufficient balance of virtue to ameliorate the degenerative force of Eros because I have been writing only of 'reason' and of

social convention, of even-handedness. What quality is it that can bring softness or tolerance into convention, duty and the social contract? It is generosity, and Eros can be tamed by it as can reason and logic.

'(g)enerosity does not mean acting in accordance with this or that document or law; it means doing more than what the law requires – at least what the laws of man require – and acting in conformity with the sole requirements of love, morality or solidarity' (Comte-Sponville, 2003 p.87).

So justice tempered by generosity gives way to something less personal, less intimate and less rational than laws administered by the state because justice recognises our mutual dependence. The Law of the state requires argument and debate to administer justice. Generosity has no such need, and it is not even-handed, neither is it necessarily rational.

So if I take the law in an organisation to be those policies and practices that enact the vision, how does duty and justice operate in relation to compliance with those rules?

Increasingly, the most important aspect of WHHA's culture, noted by more than one systems analyst, was the general aversion to written knowledge, either by reading about how an action should be carried out or by recording the action that had been taken! We relied more on knowledge gained through watching and coaching others, rather than passing written information around.

There were two ways we, as Directors, dealt with this. Firstly we used the authority of the Board members and Sub-committees, who expected regular reporting to create internal management deadlines and secondly we implemented more comprehensive IT systems. Increasing computerisation meant that we could slice the business processes up into smaller and smaller pieces, in order to get more reliable data, which naturally resulted in reducing job satisfaction and de-skilling, and was much resisted.

Custom and practice was as much 'the law', probably more so, than policies and procedures. The Chief Executive's generosity of spirit often prevailed, because individual staff members made special cases for exemption it meant that WHHA was not a 'rational' organisation, but one that looked towards individual loyalty

and commitment to achieve its aims. Duty was not a prerequisite for success, but an ability to interpret the vision was noticed and honoured.

If we were able to love each other perfectly perhaps there would be no need for justice at all? I am reminded of WH Auden's poem:

'LAW LIKE LOVE

Law, say the gardeners, is the sun  
Law is the one  
All gardeners obey  
Tomorrow, yesterday, today.

Law is the wisdom of the old  
The impotent grandfathers feebly scold  
The grandchildren put out a treble tongue  
Law is the senses of the young

Law says the priest with a priestly look  
Expounding to an unpriestly people  
Law is the words in my priestly book  
Law is my pulpit and my steeple  
Law says the judge as he looks down his nose,  
Speaking clearly and most severely  
Law is as I've told you before  
Law is as you know I suppose  
Law is but let me explain it once more  
Law is the Law

...

If we, dear, know no more  
Than they about the Law  
If I know no more than you  
Know what we should and should not do  
Except that all agree  
Gladly or miserable  
That the Law is

...

We shall boast anyway  
Like love I say.

Like love we don't know where or why  
Like love we can't compel or fly  
Like love we often weep  
Like love we seldom keep' (Auden 1976 p.208).

## THE SECOND ITERATION: REFLECTION

### On models of leadership

Eros supports leaders that are in command and in control mode, planning effectiveness, taking charge of strategic forces, and focused on results and achievement. Leadership here notices what is effective and that which is efficient. It checks out value for money and delivers the Business Plan.

And all these elements are important if an organisation is to thrive. Authority and power can be identified in the Law, in the bureaucracy, in the way that expectations are communicated, in the definitions of success and rewards for compliance.

There is a magnetism and dynamism in this kind of power that is attractive, that acts as a beacon that is charismatic that pulls people towards a leader. This erotic force field forms part of a larger gravitational field that keeps people and teams working together well, and which provides the safety and containment for the 'well-oiled machine'.

'(Management) should make sure that there is a clear statement of the organisations purpose and that it uses this as a basis for its planning. It should constantly review the decisions it takes, making sure that they further the organisations purposes and contributes to the intended outcomes...(and) should decide how the quality of the service to users is to be measured' (Langlands, 2004)

I used to have fantasies about WHHA departments working together like cogs in a machine and I guess that a lot of senior managers have similar metaphors at the back of their minds when faced with the messy chaos of real organisational life.

My account of my leadership practice shows that when our plans unfolded well I took it as a sign that it was meant to happen and that those ungovernable forces



that erupt and disrupt the best laid plans were sleeping like bad-tempered grizzly bears, hibernating in their cages!

The sweet smell of success was my payback for effort, the intimation that perhaps it really is possible to introduce change, to do new things, to keep responding to the needs of the homeless in new and more appropriate ways.

However, Senge and others write that if a leader is not prepared to change then s/he will not be able to lead where others will follow. And this is where the idea of spiritual leadership, personal mastery and the leader as servant, arose in the 1990's. And this configuration of leadership usually involves spiritual practice and a belief in a capacity for transcendence.

'The intellectual power of balance includes the executive capacity to think on one's feet in the midst of crisis. It includes the moral capacity to act with integrity and compassion in times of pressure, adversity, turbulence and transformation. It includes the strategic capacity to weave all that one knows, all that one intuits, and all that one neglects into actions that reverberate positively on all time horizons. And it includes the visionary capacity to see what one does not see – the visionary capacity to challenge the assumptions of one's current ways of seeing and thinking – the visionary capacity to see other perspectives and to see through transformations in one's own perspective' (Torbert, 1991 p.5).

Others have extended spiritual metaphors and disciplines to leadership practices and skills. In order to change the world, Quinn believes that each of us must first discover what our unique purpose is, then when we know, we are willing to make whatever sacrifice may be needed and thereby be enabled to make a contribution that will make a difference.

"Based on all the good and bad things that have happened in your life, what unique mission have you been prepared to serve that no one else can?" ... Knowing our unique purpose in life leads us to be more internally driven and gives us the will to overcome the challenges of the external world. This in turn allows us to more effectively engage the external world and add value to it. Victor Frankl lived through the Nazi concentration camps and wrote a book about his psychological observations. He noted two points that are relevant here. First, that people are always free to choose. Second, having a sense of purpose gives

us the strength and the capacity to transcend even very abusive and even life threatening situations' (Quinn, 2000 p.106).

Jaworski has a tale to tell of his 'conversion' and the subsequent world-wide success that he achieved in spreading his ideas about ethical leadership.

'The ground of being that enables the grand will to operate is the ground of being of the implicate order – being a part of the unfolding process of the universe... It manifests in our life by doing, by taking action now. ...something important has shifted – and what has fundamentally shifted is the "I". ... I am now part of the unfolding, generative process, and in this state of being, I am no longer controlled by things and instincts. ... From the moment I walked out of Bohm's office, what happened to me had the most mysterious quality about it. Things began falling into place almost effortlessly – unforeseen incidents and meetings with the most remarkable people who were to provide crucial assistance to me' (Jaworski, 1998 pp.134-135).

I find these books very uplifting. They send me into a reverie of possibility, asking myself the same question 'What is my unique purpose, and wondering if things are magically falling into place for me like Jaworski!' But after a few days when this magic of the possibility has worn off I reply 'Dunno, not interested'!

With all my enthusiasm for organisational mission, for doing good in the world, why am I left querying the whole idea, my body feeling static, obstinate. Why does it not feel right at all? Where is this resistance coming from?

The Hindu question 'Who am I?' seems to be similar to the questions posed by Quinn and Jaworski, but then is followed by 'What is my unique purpose, what would I be willing to die for?'. Instead the Hindu question is 'What is the purpose of my being in this world?' This latter question is more open and does not assume a unique purpose. I resist the insertion of that word unique and the implication that there must be a 'higher purpose', rather than a quality of 'intention' that leads to an action. My responses to these writings is showing me that alongside my beliefs in the changing nature of consciousness and the changing "I", comes also an expectation that my actions and contributions will alter, so that nothing can be so fixed because purpose changes as awareness changes.

I think that another issue here is the link made between purpose and outcome. If my actions are intended to bring about a particular outcome, then we become 'bound by the results of our actions and must experience the consequences whether pleasant or painful' (Prem, 1969 p.21). Whilst it is not possible to live without action, the aim of yoga is to become aware of the attitude with which action is taken, and the more desire that is contained within the action, the less worthy and less meaningful, and possibly more harmful that action will be.

'Desire is the wish to consume. To imbibe, devour, ingest and digest – annihilate. Desire needs no other prompt but the presence of alterity. That presence is always and already an affront and a humiliation. Desire is the urge to avenge the affront and avert the humiliation' (Bauman, 200 p.9).

So, one way of deciding what might be a good thing to do, is to begin to notice what motivates me towards action and the embodied sensations that actions evoke as a way of understanding the potential, but nevertheless unquantifiable, effect of that contribution.

If taking action results in either personal pleasure or pain, then this may be an indication that the ties that bind me have just been replicated again in repeating patterns of behaviour. When I was a child the measurement of the 'truth' of emotional language was what I named earlier as my 'internal sounding board'. Now, after 18 years of meditating that internal sounding board has been influenced by my knowledge of the three '*gunas*' or attitudes to action, and I ask myself am I in *tamsic*, *rajasic* or is this action *sattvic*? The *tamsic* quality is heavy, inert, angry, and jealous. The *rajasic* quality is active, anxious, greedy and has powerful negative emotions, focussed on results and power. The *sattvic* quality is self-controlled, committed to justice and equality, is happy, compassionate, and shows endurance and patience. Hindu philosophy says that we each have various combinations of all three *gunas* and these make-up our personality.

'These three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are ... the strands of which the twisted rope of being is woven. All things, from the grossest matter to subtlest cosmic thought-stuff, are manifestations of one or more of these three tendencies, and it is one of the tasks of the disciple to analyse all phenomena in terms of these *gunas*. His effort is to be able to stand firm in *sattva* for as we

have seen it is *sattva* alone that can reflect the Light. He must therefore be able to say of all phenomena: this is *sattvic* for it brings increase of Light and harmony and so will lead me upwards; this is *rajasic* for it leads me to motion and is founded on desire; this is *tamsic* for it fills the soul with darkness, taking it captive to outer Fate' (Sri Krishna Prem, 1969 p.139).

Here there are similarities with the Bhuddist notion, noticing the action of the grasping mind. Bhuddism and Hinduism share the concept of non-attachment both in relation to the self as well as to the results of action. In Hinduism this *sattvic* non-attachment is also called dispassion, and awareness of its action comes about through increasing the discriminative capacity of the self. Discrimination shows itself as an increasing ability to notice the fluctuations of consciousness, and it is through spiritual practice of meditation, sacrifice and renunciation that this non-attached, unselfish awareness is developed.

### **The skills of leadership**

My refusal to take on the notion of a 'unique' purpose also feels the same as my resistance to cognitive models of adult development. These models just don't feel 'right', and yet they are everywhere, not just in Western philosophy and education, but also in eastern mysticism. It is too facile to dismiss their linearity only as gendered bias because they run through all cultures over thousands of years, even though patriarchy has also been in existence for thousands of years, I do not think that this is sufficient ground for ignoring the ideas.

I need to explore this antipathy because I want to use this challenge to come up with a different answer, and I want an answer that fits within the schema of my own understanding of where development of leadership skills and spiritual practice might take me. When I contemplate inwardly there is no special purpose that I can define. I have a persistent habit of acting heroically, when eros is in the ascendant, and that I know is *rajas* - an extension of my greedy desirous self.

In the Bhagavat Gita, control over passion is compared to the control over the horses pulling Arjuna's chariot. Krishna has told Arjuna to drive his chariot into battle against his cousins to prevent his family being murdered by them.

'The battle was fought on the plain of Kurukshetra, a sacred place of pilgrimage. It was here, just before the armies engaged, that Krishna and Arjuna had the conversation that was recorded in the Bhagavad Gita' (Prabhavananda and Isherwood, 1987 p.23).

'Krishna, Krishna  
Now as I look on  
These are my kinsmen  
Arrayed for battle  
My limbs are weakened  
My mouth is parching  
My body trembles  
My hair stands upright  
The bow Gandiva  
Slips from my hand  
My brain is whirling  
Round and round  
I can stand no longer  
Krishna I see such omens of evil' (Prabhavananda and Isherwood, 1987 p.31)

'Small wonder is it that Arjuna is overcome with utter dejection and that his bow slips from his nerveless hand as he sinks down overcome by intolerable sadness... What will be worth the victory if "those for whose sake we desire kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures" must first lie dead on the field? If all desire is renounced, will not the whole of life become an empty waste, a vast desert in the midst of which the victorious Soul will sit enthroned in desolation, exercising a vain and empty rule' (Sri Krishna Prem, 1969 p.3).

I watch the dynamic of love and justice through which the virtues of generosity and duty dance, sometimes enslaved and sometimes liberated, knowing that they are entwined with each other. Eros can unite us and bring us into connection through our capacity to believe in and derive meaning from a higher power; but sometimes eros must be quietened by generosity and contained, by obligation, duty and convention.

These are where further dangers lurk, when eros is combined with political or hierarchical power, with leadership, with the desires of the leader. This is the degenerative, the addictive source of power for leaders who cannot or do not, see or listen. If as a leader I get muddled about the power of the vision, get to

think that the vision is 'my' vision, or that my idealism becomes equated with a universal, higher power, then eros can no longer be a force for good.

'As individualism has become more pervasive and extreme, the pain and suffering which flow from its darker aspects are increasing. In the same way in which our beliefs in the economic institutions in our society are reinforced, we are encouraged to believe that individualism and competition are fundamentally natural and right. We fail to notice their negative effects on the quality of our lives, or we attribute these effects to other causes, or we believe that they are inevitable.

Much of the behaviour currently rewarded in organisations and in our culture is addictive to a significant degree. ... Addictive patterns in organisations are also feed people's needs to assuage isolation, alienation and lack of love' (Harrison, 1999 p.2).

The strength of passion cannot be controlled just by the Law, or by administration of justice or by punishment, by the dance of duty and generosity. These are external constraints. I must also learn control internally, from within, by surrendering. It does not matter what is renounced but the strength of will and broadening of awareness that develops as a consequence of 'giving up' is what becomes valuable.

There is a clear relation between the senses and eros. My question to anyone taking a teaching or mentoring role in developing leadership skills based on either spiritual beliefs or spiritual disciplines would be, 'Are you master of Eros, are you in control of your senses?' Most teachers, facilitators, management consultants do not have that level of personal awareness. It is as the poet says:

There are those that give little of the much that they have – and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome.

And there are those who have little and give it all...

Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the heart' (Gibran, 1998 pp. 29-30).

When I look at the events of my life so far, I think 'Goodness, I have come a long way, and some extraordinary events have happened' but they do not tell me my purpose or what I must make happen, quite the reverse.

My response to my life events goes in the opposite direction, I say 'Where are these stories leading me, what do they tell me about my part in the world, how must I prepare for the next step that will unfold before me?' I do not believe that I can make things happen in the world by sacrificing myself - I've been there and done that, and I don't think that leads to 'good' works in the long run. I do think that sacrifice and renunciation prepares a person (or a leader) for noticing the possibility of giving service, and for acting well when the opportunities arise.

My adult development started after the direct experience of divine love, and was supported and continued through the practice of meditation. As the stories in Chapter Five show, I did not follow Patanjali's 8 Limbs of Yoga starting at the 1<sup>st</sup> limb and going through those learning stages. No, I started at the 7<sup>th</sup> Limb, and then went to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> limbs, and then to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> limbs. And now I move messily up and down between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> limb! This is a mandalic growth; the lotus flower of my lived experience. Opportunities for growth are like the buds of the thousand petalled lotus flower opening, seemingly at random, driven by desire, challenged by contradiction with no seeming logic that enables a measurement. This is growth on multiple levels not based purely in cognitive knowing but based on many other ways of knowing.

It is clear that although acting heroically gives me great narcissistic pleasure and I am very concerned with knowing the 'right' way of leading and managing, at the same time I reject many 'agentic' ways of leading and prefer instead to look for the 'mandala's' of opportunity! Waiting for the opportunity to bring my ideal into practice, as the leadership account shows.

I am aware that my personal development is mandalic. It has an absorptive quality. My learning arises through my reactions to the world around me, but it is not passive because I am asking 'What does this mean' in the process of deciphering what action is being asked of me in whatever situation I find myself. I contrast this with the agentic visionary sense of being a leader, the leader who makes things happen. Leaders don't just make this happen, they need also to prepare to recognise opportunities by working on themselves, preparing the

ground for leadership. And I am promoting a way of leading, which involves these two aspects of leadership and incorporates a third. I am calling this the ability to recognise the mandala of possibility, the recognition of possibility that opens in the environment, where there is understanding of what it might mean, and an ability to see what this circumstance is asking of leadership. The leader's role here may be not to achieve or to lead at all, or it may be s/he is being asked to give up a previous course of action, it certainly will not be a positive pre-given or habitual leadership action and is not easily linked to particular skills.



### **Torbert's model of Leadership Development**

Is this another way of expressing the meaning of Torbert's visionary capacities and the work that a leader at the Magician or the Ironist stage undertakes according to Torbert's Leadership Development Framework (LDF)?

A couple of years ago, I took the Sentence Completion Test (SCT), following Torbert's leadership model. I was assessed as an 'Achiever', in the 'conventional' stages, so I was still conforming after 16 years meditating! This does not describe or capture the breadth of my experience or what I bring to my work. However, it does describe my attitude towards tests, convention and my approach to learning the social rules, conforming to the Law, and my use of language. I know that gap between normality and derangement, and I feel the need to know convention well. If I don't 'keep up' then I might get submerged again, drop out and be unable to pull myself back to 'normal'. What I mean by 'normal' is being able to express verbally and clearly to others what I mean.

I do not enjoy reading the detail about either the LDF or the SCT; I squirm in the chair as I make myself sit still. After reading Fisher, Rook and Torbert 2000, this is how I remember the stages:

The Opportunist manager: out for short-term gains, grabbing what he can, and no planning.

The Diplomat: kind, supportive, fitting in and avoiding nastiness.

The Expert: knowing how to do what he does well, cautious and resistant to other spheres of knowledge.

The Achiever: focussed on outcomes, inventive, concerned to make things work as well as possible.

The Individualist: realising that much of what he does is convention, that it is possible to alter one's perspective, curious, looking deeper into issues.

The Strategist: able to recognise other people's frames and able to reframe; able to see his frame and alter the part he plays.

The Magician: paradoxical, quirky, not reliant on rules and more involved in the principles that lie behind conventions.

The Ironist: Not sure! Is this spiritual enlightenment?

I stop reading, stiff, angry and exasperated, 'Why am I so interested in this stuff?' Is it just because I am an Achiever and have to get it right and come out on top with full marks? I hope not, and I continue to watch myself being fascinated by this model, wanting to know more, wanting to be better, wanting always to disagree, to challenge, to find some resolution – or at least some peace – from all these paradoxical disturbances. I say to myself, 'This is the only model of leadership development linked to action research, is that why it is so important to you?' Umm

The notes provided for the LDF course in April 2000 state:

'The premise that language is constitutive of experience is a cornerstone of ego-development theory...' (Harthill, 2000)

This is a cognitive model that has been tested on men and women managers, the results of which show no differentiation between gender. Yet gender differences in the use and application of language show up all the time in 'Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus' (Gray, 2002) and in Simon Baron-Cohen's book 'The Essential Difference' (Baron-Cohen, 2004). Women managers are probably more like men than most women-in-general, so does that mean its just me that doesn't fit the model?

I read the list of factors given on the LDF course that typify each stage. These are written to assist participants on the course to identify leadership stages.

Interpersonal skills  
Cognitive style  
Conscious preoccupation  
Internal fantasies  
Decision-making  
Organisational style  
Chief defences  
Character of depression

Fear of success  
Counselling style  
Language use. (Harthill, 2000)

This list was produced in order to be helpful, but these are stereotypes. My mood turns sour. Perhaps I can surface my objections by reading some contrasting perspectives, listening to my body, asking 'Does this make me feel easier in my mind, does this feel right?' and I open Carole Gilligan's 'In a Different Voice' (Gilligan, 1993). A few pages into the introduction and I feel as if I am drinking from a cool stream, quenching my thirst at the end of a long hot day.

'Relationship requires connection. It depends not only on the capacity for empathy or the ability to listen to others and learn their language or take their point of view, but also in having a voice and having a language. The differences between men and women that I describe centre on a tendency for women and men to make different relational errors – for men to think that if they know themselves, following Socrates dictum, they will also know women, and for women to think that if only they know others, they will come to know themselves. Thus men and women tacitly collude in not voicing women's experiences and build relationships around a silence that is maintained by men's not knowing their disconnection from women and women's not knowing their dissociation from themselves. Much talk about relationships and love carefully conceals these truths' (Gilligan, 1993 pp. xix-xx).

Women do use words, language, make moral choices differently from men. The relation between thinking, acting and being is often different, and the relation between emotions, bodily knowing and thought is different too. I think perhaps that I should emphasise the distinctions between cognitive and moral development, between cognitive and experiential knowing.

Emotional, bodily knowing is missed out in verbal tests and physical 'presence' is missing. Presence is a vital carrier; it shows how we come to understand the quality of another's commitment, and quality of attention, and of care. Here is how the 'interpersonal style' of the highest stage is characterised in the LDF course notes:

'Relationship seen as involving inevitable mutual interdependence. Cherishing of individual style and diversity' (Harthill, 2000)

This does not say enough about the peak of leadership development.

There is too much reliance and an implicit assumption that the relations of thinking, feeling, acting and being are, if not in a strict linear relation to each other, at least show a discernible logic that just leads to 'inevitable mutual interdependence'. When these combine with a linear model of adult development within a frame of the organisational mission, which is also necessarily 'top-down', then I begin to understand my resistance to the SCT and the LDF. Living the dynamic of 'mutual interdependence' does not automatically arise as a consequence of cognitive development.

The question I would like to ask any Magician or Ironist is 'Are you in control of your senses. Do you understand your inner relationship with your idealism and your desires? Like Arjuna, have you mastered those five horses – the senses – that draw your chariot – your Self?' The LDF model does not ask, 'What is your intention, what are your deep driving desires?' This is an aspect of moral development that is ignored in a cognitive model. And yet the requirement for moderating desire has been around a long time:

'Socrates submits that since people prefer to have slaves who are not intemperate, all the more when it comes to choosing a leader, "should we choose one whom we know to be a slave of the belly, or of wine, or of lust, or sleep?"' (Aristotle *History of Animals* in Foucault, 1984 p.61).

Torbert (Torbert 2000) does raise the issue of the senses in relation to first person research and sexuality, he suggests that:

'*Coitus interruptus* is a symbol of two (or even three or four) persons ability to interrupt any pleasurable perspective and action for the higher and more generous pleasure of a more inclusive and more mutual awareness and interaction. ...

The truly erotic impulse cannot know its proper form or enactment until it engages relationally' (Torbert, 2000 p.254) .

This, in Hindu terms, is *pratyahara*, the fifth limb of yoga, withdrawal of the senses from the object of desire. This is the final mastery of the bodily senses

prior to resting in the Buddhi (or intellectual sheath) when awareness of the duality of our bodily nature has receded. Surely *pratyahara* is not dependent on cognition?

When withdrawal of the sense occurs, a person does not take action with her eye on the outcome, because then the action is pushing or resisting and there needs to be a mark in the sand to check progress. When duality is overcome action is just part of the flow and there is no need to make marks in the sand, there is instead the mandala of possibility.

As an 'Achiever' I could never take my eye off the organisational mission and strategy, everything needed to be focussed on moving things forward in a sequence of some kind. That is partly why I left WHHA, to give myself the opportunity and permission to stop working in this way, but old habits die hard.

The higher levels of the LDF are not explicitly linked to the higher levels of spiritual development, but there are clear and obvious links. None of the high leadership levels involve much practical activity; most characteristics are described as relational and linked to living principle and values. Isn't this collapse into 'connection' the feminine side of eros? Why not include this in the earlier stages, and give the feminine opportunity for developing agentically within this framework?

What organisational value (as opposed to political value, or community value, or educational value) do the higher levels of development hold in a patriarchal society? I have my doubts about it, and those doubts are increased by the hotchpotch of spiritual discipline that is all mixed up with an agentic, cognitive definition of leadership, where the measure of development is predicated mainly on language.

Torbert does not go far enough in addressing alternative modes of adult and spiritual development, and he does not acknowledge the possibility of a multiplicity of developmental lines developing as an eruption that is realised all-together-at-once.

I want to bring the LDF into my work as if it is a flatter structure, one that incorporates lateral extensions of the cognitive stages and which includes

bodywork, emotional connection and moral development at different (higher or lower) levels on a linear scale. There have been attempts to combine Myers Briggs, placing it on a lateral plane across each longitudinal stage, but I want to work more flexibly with the interdependence of the body / emotions / cognitive function within a person, as I do with myself. I am working to support that internal integration (the synaesthesia) of body, emotions and mind, allowing this to happen as a developing mode of loving consciousness.

## THE THIRD ITERATION: REFLECTION

### On Pleasure

Everything alters over time, both the good and the bad. My experience is that by seeing this through provides its own inherent pleasure.

'Just as there are different desires for different objects, so too, if love is desire, there should be different loves for different objects of our love. ... What all these differences have in common, and what justifies the use of the same word for all of them, is the pleasure, as Stendhal would say, or the joy as Spinoza would say, that the various objects of our love give us or give rise to within us. ... to love is to derive pleasure in seeing, touching, feeling, knowing or imagining' (Comte-Sponville, 2003 p.249).

In this way my understanding of loving leadership activity becomes embedded in my embodied knowing and is not a separate manifestation of thought.

For me, pleasure comes in the enaction of love as it winds its way through the messiness of living and loving in a real world where the results of my actions are unlikely to be what I want or expect.

Not all of it feels good as I live it, but reflecting on my account of action, I get a pleasurable sense from the resolution of dissonance. That the power of eros initiates a dynamic of pleasure that does not end in satiation but instead it renews itself in a continuous process of becoming.

## Summary

I reflect on my leadership activity, and write through the frame of theory whilst holding the power of eroticism in my mind. This is not a structured analysis. Instead the act of writing creates a reflective space in which to ponder how erotic love influences my leadership activity. I do this from an embodied sense of a connection between eros and the inhalation, the breath that brings energy and vitality into the body.

In the first reflective stage I address resistance to the enaction of organisational vision. I consider the role that written policies and practices play in exercising organisational control. I link these issues to cultural constructions of self, to Ricoeur's hermeneutical interpretation of the super abundance of love and its relation to the law and social justice.

And I develop my ideas about how eros can be controlled in organisational terms, through rules and procedures, based on my leadership practice. Writing this reminded me of the way in which I saw other Directors 'bending the rules' in response to particular circumstances, and taking Ricoeur's thoughts into account, I reflect on how the superabundance of love also brings generosity into decision making processes.

In the second reflective stage, I write about the charismatic nature of the strong leader. I refer to the management literature that suggests the need for personal growth and spiritual development, and which advocates developing a sense of a unique personal contribution. In doing this I come to write about control of desire, about not 'getting one's own way'.

These reflections link back to the idea of enacting organisational vision, and I begin to question the value of a skills based approach to leadership development. As I write, I bring in elements of Hindu theory, and consider the links between desire and leadership practises in more depth.

I begin to compare linear stages of adult growth with mandalic, spontaneous models of growth and critique Torbert's Leadership Development Framework. I decide that the LDF is not only over reliant on a particular form of rationality, but



that it also depends on a particular way of learning that must not be assumed to be universal.

In the final reflection, I reiterate the sense of pleasure that arises from my consideration of the dynamical power of eros. As I review this Chapter I can appreciate how the ordering principles of my language demonstrate this dynamical ebb and flow, balance and counterbalance. And my reflections also show me both the complexity and the value of my intention to bring eros more fully into organisational life through my leadership activity.

## **PART THREE: PRACTICE**

### **CHAPTER EIGHT**

#### **AGAPE AND ORGANISATION**

*This Chapter follows the same format as Chapters Four, Six and Seven. I cultivate a sense of agape in my mind as I reflect on relationship. I use my action account of practice, which includes reference to my daily spiritual practice, as the grounding from which my reflective writing emerges.*

*As in previous chapters, I refer back to the theory contained in Chapter Two.*

*There are four reflective iterations in this Chapter, which generated a lot of data.*

*These iterations are followed by a summary of the main themes on page 257.*

*The reader may wish to look at the summary first.*

#### **ACTION ACCOUNT: LEADERSHIP PRACTICE IN NHH**

##### **Critical Incident and the Dynamic of Contradiction**

This account describes relationships on the Board of NHH, a housing association set up to take the transfer of housing stock from the local housing authority, and shows how I dealt with an issue that involved the relationships between Board members and the Housing Corporation.

As I journalled these events, I defined five separate issues.

These five strands are comprised of

- (1) The Housing Corporation's regulatory role: the pull towards secrecy and the push towards democratic, open decision making.
- (2) Issues of social justice and the dynamic of difference, which the 'Tenant Participation and Involvement Policy' and the 'Equality and Diversity' policies of NHH attempt to address in practice.

- (3) The move towards improving tenant services at the front end and at the highest level of organisation through tenant empowerment and effective governance structures.
- (4) Reviewing and determining the implementation of NHH's corporate values through policies and procedures.
- (5) And containing, supporting and holding the activities of the Board, and its decision making processes by improving relationships between Board members.

As a part of my journalling, I draw 'Mapping a Critical Incident'<sup>1</sup> showing how I depict the interaction of these policies and the values that are embedded within them.

**The issues: I experience a concern:**

The Board has 15 members, five local Councillors, five Tenant Members and five Independent Members. No one except myself has any experience of Housing Associations or their Regulator, the Housing Corporation. The Chief Executive and Chair rely heavily on consultants in the months before the transfer of housing took place. The position of the tenant representatives is particularly difficult because they often have little experience of Committee work, which for Housing Associations also involves complicated financial arrangements and legal frameworks. The role of the Housing Corporation can be either friendly or antagonistic, depending on the issue and whether they are in 'inspection' mode or 'consulting' mode. Neither role is very easy to discern except through experience.

NHH's lead regulator from the Housing Corporation said at a Board Away Day 'You can always phone me for advice if you are not sure of anything' and so a tenant board member contacted her privately about the Chairman's sub-group decision making. This was a problem first raised several months ago, when I journalled:

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter One, page 18

'I ... think that the decisions that have been made are fine, it's just the way that they are made that's the problem...

The plot thickens with M (tenant member) handing out a typed sheet with conspiracy theories everywhere fed by B (tenant member) who is also Chair of the Personnel Group and his neighbour!

**I fail to imagine an appropriate solution, and wait for events that would indicate what my next action should be:**

I had been biding my time over the issue of ratification of decisions made outside the Board meetings. I had raised this in relation to the behaviour of our Consultants at the time of transfer, and again in relation to the conduct of Board meetings, and yet again when referring to the relationship between the Board and its Sub-Committees.

I decide that there is a problem about lack of openness that could well not withstand very close scrutiny, but that the decisions that had been made were in line with usual housing association practice. I assume the communication problems are arising partly from ignorance of how housing association Boards are expected to conduct themselves, ignorance of the meaning of Housing Corporation requirements, and an experience of 'cabinet government' and party politics.

I wait for the right time and for an opportunity to raise these issues. I try to let go of my frustration and anger in my practices of silence. I am not very successful!

Predictably, following the conversation with the tenant Board member our Regulator ceased to be an advisor and became the Regulator, we had received a couple of very serious letters from the Housing Corporation that were read out at the next meeting.

**Now I knew that I must act to support the Chair and officers of the association:**

I write to the Chairman and to the Chief Executive. This is the full text of my email:

Having 'slept on' and digested further the correspondence from the Housing Corporation and our reply, these are my further thoughts.

First of all I want to reiterate my ongoing support for you as Chairman and for the Chief Executive of NHH. I think it is important that the remaining Board members, having now been privy to this correspondence and after due consideration, also pledge their full support and that the Housing Corporation are cognisant of this.

As you know, I welcome the Chairman's Group terms of reference, which we agreed last night. Taken together with the reporting and minuting of Chairs Actions at the commencement of the Board meeting following the decision, this should now have clarified and opened up the decision making processes to the satisfaction of ourselves and our regulator.

We must also satisfy our regulator and ourselves that an effective Board heads NHH, and we must be sure that all current members support the revised governance and executive arrangements in relation to pay and remuneration of staff. I have two further suggestions in this regard:

The Board agrees at its next meeting the way in which sensitive information agreed through Chairman's Action or the Chairman's Group be reported and ratified by the Board. This is always a difficult area, and RSL's deal with it in various ways. The important issue is that we agree in advance of an issue arising, the process by which sensitive material is reported and ratified. This is a safeguard not only for the Board but also for staff.

That we agree a 12 month review, in closed session, of the new governance arrangements, the reporting arrangements for sensitive issues and any unresolved tenancy (or other) issues that any Board member may have raised during the previous 12 months under the protocol agreed at the meeting last night. This would be an opportunity for all Board members to raise 'running sores' that might otherwise fester and erupt – which it seems may have led us into the present situation.

If we are to have a Special Meeting of the Board we will need not only to affirm our support for the Chairman and Chief Executive, but also ratify the decisions on pay and remuneration that were made at the Chairman's Group held on the 8 April as I do not recall these being reported last night.

We need to continue to demonstrate that we have upheld, and intend to continue to uphold, the highest standards of probity in all our dealings.

The AoB experience last night came as a great shock and was incredibly upsetting to me. I had assumed that all Board members realised the importance of resolving differences within the Board itself, and it may take some time before this trust is re-established.

As letters from the Housing Corporation go, I would rank the content as very serious but rate the language as mild. And I would guess that the regulator is unlikely to take any other action if the Board is seen to deal effectively with the issues she has raised. And as Chairman, I think that you have already responded well and taken appropriate action.

I was wondering if it might also be worthwhile thinking about a mini-training session prior to a Board meeting on relationships with, and the role of, the Housing Corporation. Although KJ did cover this at an Away Day and at a Board meeting, it might be an idea to get someone, say a Board member from another RSL, to talk about it from the practitioner's perspective. And of course as from the 1 April inspections are being carried out by the Audit Office so there are more regulatory changes on the way, the implications of which the Board will need to be aware of at some point.

These are my thoughts, I hope they may be some assistance in your deliberations. It has obviously been a very busy and stressful time for you C... lets hope we can settle down soon to the business of running this new, super organisation really well.

Regards,  
Eleanor

I feel very strongly about the need to support the position of the Chairman and Chief Executive. I acted immediately and do reflect on this.

The tenant Board member who had spoken to the regulator had resigned at the Board meeting in April, then later rescinded his resignation. This is his email:

I have had some time to reflect upon my offer of resignation at the last board meeting. Realising it was an ill-considered and rash decision, brought on in no small way by T's intimidating and masterful performance, I now withdraw the offer and intend to stay on the board, certainly until September 2004.

I believe my actions were justified and stand by my claims. I will provide the board with additional information if asked to do so.

Your reply to ... at the Housing Corporation contains a number of 'inaccuracies' and if my contacting them does result in their "breathing down our necks", as T suggested, perhaps it can only be seen as a good thing.

For your information, I should like to sit on the Audit Sub-Committee.

### **I review and evaluate my actions:**

I meditate, supported by the rhythm of my daily spiritual practice. I am uncertain about how to act and felt very ambivalent about how NHH is supporting tenant Board members. It looks OK on the surface, but actually there are all kinds of difficult ethics at play for tenants, and in addition, they do not have experience of high-level decision making forums like this. One tenant Board member clearly found it very confusing and felt unable to get sufficient clarification to set her mind at ease. This is serious for a Board one third of whose members are tenants.

### **I decide to seek the views of other Board members, reflect further on my position, and then imagine a solution:**

I have conversations with two other Independent Board members before the Special Board meeting. I reflect on whether or not I can trust this tenant on a personal level. My question is, 'Can I trust him, knowing that he thought that he had taken the only possible logical, rational step open to him? I apply the Torbert's Leadership Development Framework and ask myself where would I place him, which stage of cognitive development he had reached. The answer is the 'Impulsive Stage' and so I conclude that I cannot trust him.

This decision is confirmed by the subsequent discussion in the special Board meeting. This tenant kept saying that his action had been proved to be 'right' because the Housing Corporation's interest had led to a significant improvement

in openness and a restructuring of the sub-groups. I agree with that conclusion, but it was clear that he had no conception of the damage to relationship and to future Board deliberations that had resulted from his action. For the organisation to be excellently managed, 2.2 of the regulatory code states that:

'Housing Associations should be headed by an effective Board with a sufficient range of expertise – supported by the appropriate governance and executive arrangements – that will give capable leadership and control' (Housing Corporation 2002).

I think that means working together to honour, respect and support relationship within the parameters of the housing association movement as it attempts, however clumsily, to uphold the concept of social justice through the redistribution of wealth through the provision of good housing and the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods.

#### **I evaluate the outcome:**

This incident has come to a close now, but I continue to look for an opportunity to raise the issue of tenant board member support when the openings occur. Knowing also that those who took part in these events will weave their different stories.

It is also likely that this will go down in the Board's history as a defining moment, and those resignations may cause further ripples, further iterations through the tenant voice and community consultations. Will the stories become a canker or a learning point, or will they be lost over time?



## THE FIRST ITERATION: REFLECTION

### Embodied resonances

If eros is the inhalation, the breath that seeks the divine, focusing attention on the object of desire with the energy rising upwards from the base of the spine near the sexual organs, all subtle sensibility lost in the drive to fulfil its objective. Then agape is the exhalation, the breath that releases the divine into everyday life. It broadens awareness and acts through the heart, opening, widening and responding, carrying its innate capacity to encompass paradox and dissonance.

I see agape everywhere like the intoxicating perfume of the lotus flower. It enables my embodied awareness and embodied knowing to happen. If my body lives in tune with agape, then it becomes the dance of life.

This aspect of love does not look for goals, purposes or achievement of any kind.

'Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things' (Corinthians Chapter 1 verses 4-7, King James Bible).

Agape does not distinguish between the good and the bad, or between friends or enemies, is 'unconditional positive regard' (Rogers, 1961) for others regardless of their socially approved worth or their level of self esteem.

' (T)he therapist experiences a warm caring for the client – a caring which is not possessive, which demands no personal gratification. ... It involves as much feeling of acceptance for the clients expression of negative, "bad", painful, fearful and abnormal feelings as for his expression of "good", positive, mature, confident and social feelings...with permission for him to have his own feelings and experiences -and to find his own meanings in them' (Rogers, 1961 p. 284).

How is agape expressed in the body if it is not an erotic passion? The felt embodied impression of agape leads me to feel giving and joyful, the kind of love that Damasio refers to,

'love is nothing but a pleasurable state, joy, accompanied by the idea of an external cause' (Spinoza quoted in Damasio, 2003 p.11).

Andre Comte-Sponville also turns to Spinoza to define love as joy;

'What is love? A joy accompanied by the idea of its cause. What is a joy? The passage to a greater perfection or reality (the two words are synonymous in Spinoza). To rejoice is to exist more fully, to feel one's capacity increased, to preserve triumphantly in one's being. To be sad is, by contrast, to exist less, to feel one's power diminished, to draw closer in some way to death or nothingness' (Comte-Sponville, 2003 p.271).

For Spinoza 'God is the origin of all there is before our senses...and is most clearly manifest in living creatures' (Damasio, 2003 p.273) and there is no distinction between thought and feeling rather a determination to bring positive feeling into relationship. So finally with Spinoza there is a deliberate 'colouring' of perception brought about through the reasoning / feeling capacity of the body / mind acting in the moment.

As I write this I am recalling Jack Whitehead writing about educational influence. I think that he is also expressing that joy that Spinoza refers to, but here he calls it 'life affirming energy':

'I have decided not to focus on a language of love or loving spirit because of the complexity of the responses. The complexity included conversations about the role of the erotic when I talked of love and a loving spirit. This complexity made it difficult to develop a shared understanding of my meanings of love and loving spirit in my educational relationships. However, what did appear to be shared was an understanding of the educational influence of a life-affirming energy others acknowledge that I bring into my educational relationships' (Whitehead, 2003 p.6).

So I experience agape as life-affirming energy arising from the out-breath. This is a relational, accepting energy that brings us together.

And this joy is what I hold as part of myself as I feel and write about my relationships in organisations. And through the joyful lens of agape, I begin to consider how relationship might give rise to organisational form and structure.

## THE SECOND ITERATION: REFLECTION

### Emotional landscapes of interaction

Now I am reflecting on the transformational nature of love by 'thinking through' agape and considering the way that conversation develops relationships and transmits emotion in organisation. Fletcher (Fletcher 2001) maintains that following relational logic, staying within the perspective of that logic, creates a discursive space in which the relational aspect of organisational life is 'allowed to retain its full power as a subversive story' (ibid. p. 84). I think that what Fletcher means is that taking an uncritical subjective position on relationships at work creates the potential for a different perspective that challenges the cultural hegemony.

Although it is not intended as such, my immersion in love, allowing joy to influence thought, inevitably challenges existing conventions because it brings a phenomenological and holistic dimension into a direct relation with the prevailing organisational logic.

'Relational theory suggests that although the prevailing models of adult growth and achievement are based on public sphere characteristics such as separation, individuation, and independence, there exists an alternative model called "growth-in-connection" that is rooted in the private sphere characteristics of connection, interdependence and collectivity' (Fletcher, 2001 p.31).

My account of leadership practice in Chapter Seven shows that I was not only determined that projects should succeed, but that I applied the learning from one project and used this iteratively in the implementation of the next. I would do whatever it takes to ensure that we had an outcome that would contribute to the overall strategic objective. This could be interpreted as 'achiever' behaviour in the Leadership Development Framework but it is relational practice, it is preserving, responsible behaviour.

As I reflect on and appreciate the complexities of projects with which I was involved, I realise that I spent time and effort maintaining relationships. Being 'diplomatic' here does not indicate a leadership stage in the linear model of

leadership so much as developing relational networks that are necessary to support a project.

Joyce Fletcher refers to this as 'preserving behaviour' following Ruddick,

'Although it might seem strange to think of the relationship between an engineer and a project as similar to the relationship between mother and child, there are a number of similarities that make it an interesting analogy. In terms of dependency, the project, like the child, cannot take care of itself. By the same token, the worker, like the mother, depends on the survival of the project in order to continue to define herself as a worker... Thus a mother's job is to oversee the whole, to be aware not just of those things within her control and directly related to specific actions defined as her responsibility but also aware of the systemic factors influencing the child's well being and to do whatever needs to be done to influence those factors' (Fletcher, 2001 pp.53-54).

Seeing project tasks and relationships within a broader context than the immediate, and imagining the consequences of alternative courses of action is an extension of Ruddick's (1989) 'preserving' behaviour. This capability was a key factor in WHHA's success in defining its strategic objectives within the government's changing policy and regulation environment.

The account of practice given above shows that as an NHH Board member I deliberately look for ways of using relational skills to achieve more effective organisational working. I hold questions about the effectiveness of the Board in the way that it includes tenant Board members. My aim is to get the organisation to acknowledge the contradictory position that tenant Board members have to deal with by the very nature of their being both tenants and Directors of the organisation. I want to assist the emergence of a truly collaborative space. Fletcher calls this behaviour creating a context:

'Creating background conditions in which group life can flourish and the feeling of the team can be experienced...' (Fletcher, 2001 p.85).

I aim to create collaborative influence contextualised within the cultural norms of the organisation, that is, not in a way which creates conflict but nevertheless in a manner that might be recognised and acted upon.

I see the creation of this context arising not just from strategic analysis but also from the emotional landscape of interaction. That awareness of the emotional landscape can be compared to the 'systems thinking' as described in Marshall, (Marshall, 2004), where I am considering the emotional frames and their effect not only on organisational relations but also on organisational structures. I hope that this reflection will show me how my actions might encourage more ways of working collaboratively and inquiringly within organisation, such that these might eventually lead to new structures and new systems. In doing this I become a thinking active contributor, able to influence the transformation of systems and organisational structures.

### **Emotional authenticity in conversation**

For mutuality to be achieved between people, the-truth-of-the-relationship needs to be given an opportunity to speak. Does this mean that acting (doing and speaking) with emotional authenticity means not play-acting emotions that are not aligned with internal feeling? Fletcher maintains that for relational logic to be effective,

'Authenticity (acknowledging vulnerability and need as well as strength, skill and expertise) is a necessary condition for mutual growth-in-connection' (Fletcher 2001, p. 87).

Learning first through socialisation what convention demands, and practising politeness gives way later to more self-determining virtues like love and compassion:

'Morality is like a politeness of the soul, an etiquette of the inner life...So morality starts at the bottom – with politeness. ...There is more to life than good manners; and politeness is not morality... Politeness is a small thing that paves the way for great things. It is ritual without God; ceremonial without religion; protocol without monarchy' (Comte-Sponville, 2003 p.10 -14).

Having learned what social convention demands I think that adult development involves a whole range of aspects of emotional intelligence that include respect for the other, and taking responsibility for my emotion and noticing the effect emotion has on my thinking and action. Spinoza's suggestion that,

*a feeling is the perception of a certain state in the body along with a perception of a certain mode of thinking and of thoughts with certain themes. Feelings emerge when the sheer accumulation of mapped details reaches a certain stage... Feeling is a consequence of the ongoing homeostatic process, the next step in the chain'* (Damasio, 2003 pp.85-86 [*Author's italics*]).

Ashforth and Tomiuk in their study of what they refer to as the 'emotional labour' of receptionists (Ashforth and Tomiuk, 2000) make an interesting distinction between surface acting and deep acting; and surface authenticity and deep authenticity, as experienced by front line service staff. And in their definition of deep authenticity, play-acting is valued even when the internal feeling behaviours are dissonant with the display of emotion.

'Surface acting involves simulating emotions that are not actually felt... Deep acting involves actively inducing, suppressing or shaping one's actual emotions so that one's expression of emotions is consistent with one's experience of emotions.'

'(S)urface authenticity occurs when one's emotional expression or display reflects one's current emotional experience. ... Deep authenticity occurs when one's emotional expression or display is consistent with the display of rules of a specific identity that one has internalised (or wants to internalise) as a reflection of self – *regardless of whether the expression genuinely reflects one's current feelings. ...you do it, you act – because you believe in it'* (Ashforth and Tomiuk, 2000 p.195 [*author's italics*]).

In analysing his many accounts of emotional experiences at work, Waldron writes:

'(E)motion is a resource that, through language choices and social tactics, is used to define work relationships. ... They (these emotional experiences) signal the delicate balance between public and private, organisational and personal realms. ...Emotional abuse is an extremely memorable and strikingly common experience reported by (the) workers' (Waldron, 2000 p.79).

And in considering group behaviour, Sandelands and Boudens make a similar point about the way that people feel and respond to each other:

'Contest and conflict are the engines of feeling at work. Status is the principle dynamic within and between groups....A great deal of feeling goes into the relationship between workers and management, a relationship often passionately antagonistic and full of intrigue. Workers' feeling run hot in stories of abuse by managers or stories of union organising and retribution. Managers' feeling runs hot in stories of worker laziness, ingratitude and subterfuge, or stories of being unjustly cast as ogres. One senses that people feel most alive and most energised when there is a battle of war going on' (Sandelands and Boudens, 2000 p. 50).

In so many accounts (Toynbee, 2003) people often say, 'I hate the job, but I would miss the people if I left', and I take that to mean, 'I would miss the life of the group, but I dislike my work or the way I am treated.' It is as if through gossip we deal with some of the frustration that emanates from work groups, perhaps it will also help to shift power balances.

'(W)hen people talk about their work and its feelings they rarely speak of what they do on the job or the meaning of the job. They talk almost exclusively about their involvement in the life of the group, including the need to limit or regulate this involvement. Feelings are not identified with evaluations of the job, even less with personal growth and development. ... Work feeling is *of* work, not *about* work....It is an aspect of doing on the job' (Sandelands and Boudens, 2000 pp. 52-53).

So, I am beginning to write about the emotional charge that is carried in conversations and the nature of group life in organisations, taking our capacity for gossip and chatting as my mental frame and which I know from experience can be a powerful force for good or ill. And I am considering it from the perspective of knowing in the heart as well as the head, and considering conversation as a means by which staff gain satisfaction with work, that what we do, and how we do it, is formed out of this emotional landscape.

How do we decide whether these emotionally charged conversations are right or wrong?

Shotter writes about a particular kind of ethical sensibility that is encapsulated in speech and that enables adult conversation to take place.

'Making sense ... within a conversational reality, constructing a grasp of what is being "talked about" from what is "said" is not ... a simple one-pass matter of an individual saying a sentence and a listener "understanding" it. ... Specifying or determining them (events) sufficiently for the relevant practical purposes involves a complex back and forth process of negotiation both between speaker and hearer, and between what has already been said, and what is currently being said, the making use of tests and assumptions, the use of both the present context and the waiting for something to be said later to make clear what was said earlier, and the use of many other "seen but unnoticed" background features of everyday senses' (Shotter, 1993 p.27).

'This sense, these *feelings* (which are not properly called emotions), work as standards against which our more explicit formulations are judged for their adequacy and appropriateness' (Shotter, 1993 p.29).

This is an incomplete process of 'giving form to feeling' that happens in conversations, through which people 'act back upon that background to give it further form' (Shotter, 1993 p.79). In this way the imaginary becomes imaginary entities and 'exert a real influence upon the structure of people's lives' (Shotter, 1993 p.80).

Conversation thus becomes an active form of living-in-the moment that gives form to feeling through an emotional landscape that contains an ethical dimension and which enacts itself through the dynamic of mutual interdependence. If I develop my inner capacity to give voice to agape, then love is enabled to enter more fully into the conversation by widening the landscape of interaction.

In organisations conversation has several functions.

'(W)hen people talk about work, they talk primarily about other people. They talk about relationships, about the intrigues, conflicts, gossips and innuendoes of group life. They talk about their friendships and the importance of camaraderie at work. There is endless fascination in this – and endless feeling. Feeling has mostly to do with the life of the group – with its divisions and play' (Sandelands and Boudens, 2000 p.50).



I think that all of these levels of emotional authenticity apply in different combinations in different circumstances and with varying levels of awareness, to everyone most days, whatever we are doing. This 'emotional landscape of interaction' (Fletcher, 2001 p.70) interacts with external experience and results in the collection of 'emotional data'. This echoes my experience of relationship in organisation, fuelled by the organisation's emotional landscape of interaction both created by staff members and also influences relationships between staff.

From my yoga teaching experience I would say that emotional competence and authenticity is not a universal capacity.

There is a way of speaking that seeks to honour the data of sensuous knowing as it is lived in the moment. An example of that conversational and intimate connection is given below.

For over 10 years a group of us went to breakfast after the yoga class on a Saturday morning. Over time these conversations became as much concerned with the shared connections that we made with each other through the act of speaking, recognising and being recognised, as with the content of what we said. We created a living space in which we could place our whole selves, in which we were wholly affirming and being affirmed. In the notes that I made afterwards of what we said, the patterning of the interchange of the words could not capture the ebb and flow of attention, the degree of excitement and involvement, the eruption of hilarity or the degree of synchronicity.

#### **CASE EXAMPLE FOUR**

##### **The Breakfasts**

For example, in a recent conversation the whole breakfast became animated after C had been talking about a changing relationship with her sister when the conversation suddenly turned onto forgiveness-in-general, and from there to the efficacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. And then we moved into the delight of using C's lens cleaning fluid and wash our reading glasses!

Our embodied sense of ourselves moves seamlessly from the politically big to the little questions of everyday living. Our conversations are not directly concerned with how to do parenting as they were when my children were little, or with organising joint action, but with making sense of our respective histories, and discovering deeper meanings. And this brings its own learning. Sometimes it takes the form of recent stories or some event that is long past that has reoccurred in some way. Sometimes out of the intensity of a discussion comes an unanticipated co-ordination of thinking that brings new clarity, a narrative revelation, which develops an ethic for future action. This happens because this is an intimate place and these are intimate bonds, and we take care of each other. We knowingly and deliberately create space and acceptance for each other through our conversing.

As friends we use speaking and listening as a form of caress to enable a mutual dynamic that takes our emotional and embodied landscapes of interaction as a given. Conversation arises not only as a consequence of connection, but also as a way of responding and affirming relationship, not just a way of making relationship.

Sometimes I get irritated and exasperated, with people who do not understand what I mean, and it shows, it interrupts relationships. I conclude that in the same way that eros requires duty to curb its excesses, so agape needs an appreciation of the dialectical relationship and needs to be challenged.

## THE THIRD ITERATION: REFLECTION

### The emergence of organisational form

My experience is that it is possible to create new forms of organisation out of relationship.

I am thinking back now to the stories in the left-hand column in Chapter Five. Here I briefly described the Brent Campaign for the Under Fives which campaigned for and achieved the setting up of a Centre for registered and unregistered childminders. That organisation was set up organically, as a consequence of a meeting of women who wanted to increase opportunities for children in a London Borough. No one was 'in charge' of the campaign although there were those among us who were more experienced in dealing with local politicians, and when we appointed staff there was no one who had had experience of recruitment.

This worthy and sustainable local community resource was set up thirty years ago in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in London as a consequence of relationships between young women with a shared passion for a more equitable distribution of educational resources. My experience is that having leaders with vision is not the only way to build organisations and that organisation can also emerge out of a jointly held leadership arising out of relationship.

I am suggesting that it is possible to give organisational form to the landscape of interaction created by relationship, that it is possible and desirable to organise from connection because it is the emergent nature of relationship that creates new possibility.

The University of Hertfordshire's Complexity Management Centre has used Complexity Theory as a basis for considering how organisational change can be influenced by changing the way key actors relate.

Griffin (Griffin, 2002) rejects Kantian notions of a pre-given Nature and of an-already-existing-Universe and develops his thinking in direct contrast with Kant, and also without reference to feeling, emotion or embodied knowing. However I

am considering relationship as an organising principle using Griffin's theory of self-organisation. The difference between Griffin's self-organisation and relational logic is that in the latter, relational logic includes feeling and emotion.

In the philosophy of Kant there is a split between the individual and the group, and between the individual and the system, between the thinking body and the feeling body, which creates conflict and paradox, and where knowledge is '*a priori*' that which existed beforehand. Griffin rejects this split and develops ideas around participative ways of relating in organisational contexts that can enable the co-creation of new knowledge through interaction. He suggests that this then becomes a self-organising process through which leaders naturally emerge. Knowledge is thus created jointly with others in the present moment; it is not determined beforehand.

In a similar way to Griffin, I suggest that agape is unconditional and has no '*a priori*' knowledge, and unlike eros, needs no rules to contain it, there is no 'Law'. Agape is more akin to life affirming energy (Whitehead, 2003), it is the stuff of relationship for which there are no public rules and which just develops as we participate, interact and challenge each other.

Patricia Shaw (Shaw, 2002), also from The University of Hertfordshire's Complexity Management Centre, suggests that bringing frustration into attention has the capacity to interrupt the organisational habitual patterns of instrumentalism, and the erotic charge towards idealism. She makes it clear that this is risky because it challenges our established purposes:

'I am interested in learning with others how we may live at times with a somewhat less 'safe' sense of self, as we experience changing and being changed by our sense making interactions, as the enabling constraints we are mutually sustaining undergo spontaneous shifts' (Shaw, 2002 p.146).

Working as management consultant with the idea of organisation, not as a living system, but as a series of complex interactions and reactions, Patricia Shaw tells stories of 'interventions' that sound more like serendipitous happenstance in the form of conversation, and which shift cultural norms in a significant way. Her narratives persuade me that working informally through conversation triggers the 'tipping points' towards significant change. She makes the point however, that

this can only be understood with hindsight. In the moment, there is no goal or outcome that focuses these informal interactions. It happens over time, and seems to rely on chance meetings and invitations, as well as deliberate contacts. This is conversation that interrupts the hegemonic logic of established managerial monologues, shifts actions by disrupting relations.

Shaw creates 'speech cracks' in the organisational landscape and describes a route through which agape might be brought into work relationships, letting joy live through relational practice, not in necessarily in a formal way but through chance connections. And certainly as a Board member I hold an image of a rough uncrafted lived landscape in my mind that is supported by agape and which I hope becomes a part of my practice.

### **How do I know that this is a good thing to do?**

I measure the worth of what I do through responses in relationship, so that while I hold to an internal standard of what I feel is authentic, my ethics have developed, and do develop, always in relation. I measure and reflect on how people feel towards me as well as what they say.

'The moral imperative that emerges repeatedly in interviews with women is an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate "real and recognisable trouble" of this world. ...For women, the integration of rights and responsibilities takes place through an understanding of the psychological logic of relationships' (Gilligan, 1987 p.100).

'The essence of a moral decision is the exercise of choice and the willingness to accept responsibility for that choice' (Gilligan, 1987 p.30).

The standard of judgement that Shaw applies is whether or not people talked differently and whether or not it 'worked'. That doesn't seem to be much of an ethical choice, more like pragmatic decision-making.

Shaw challenges the systemic view of organisations (as does Griffin) as being coercive and not dealing with conflict either because of its emphasis on unity or because of the role of leaders in these systems. Both Griffin and Shaw consider

that management gurus like Peter Senge and Margaret Wheatley are imposing a tacit view on others because they see organisations as entities or have a transcendent view which is essentially Kantian. They maintain that where there is *a priori* knowledge then emergence and creativity cannot be genuinely new. And in their critique of whole system working they abhor the emphasis on 'good intention' and 'releasing love as the generating force in the workplace' (Shaw, 2002 p.142).

But I think that to ignore our imagined relation with 'things' 'out there' means ignoring ethical standards. I agree with Will Hutton writing about the Iraq war and fundamentalism, we do not need to impose religious beliefs on each other, but we do need universal values:

'What is needed is a rediscovery of politics and a belief that purpose is best attempted in a secular guise underpinned by universal values, and that religion is a moral code to live by, rather than a purpose in its own right that gives its believers the right to deny rationality and humanity' (Hutton, 2004).

Like Shaw, I too dislike the idea of love being used as the 'glue' that binds a workforce together and which implies a certain fundamentalism and an avoidance of the shadow side. However, my proviso is that personal value and belief systems are still enabled and can still influence others within the fluidity of the complexity frame, because otherwise there is no ethical standard that operates except that which arises in conversation. And we increasingly do not have a public model of what virtues are commendable, and that is important even if it's only purpose is for us to contradict it.

A complex organisation is comparable to a pulsating web of life; a mandala of possibility, and how we relate to each other will affect the emotional landscape of interaction and what we do together. Because power is not shared equally and not everyone has the same expertise, and we do not share the same beliefs or values, it is inevitable that we do not always act either in our own or others best interest.

## **Systems and structure in organisation**

Just as Shotter (Shotter, 1993) suggests that conversations create 'Imaginal entities', so I think that structures and systems in organisation create the mental frames that reflect real structures of power within organisations that bind us into patterns of thinking and of action. This is the basis of systems thinking which Shaw and Shotter both resist because it encourages hegemony and hides the use of power.

Shaw's reasoning (Shaw, 2002) argues for self-organisation in complexity because interventions based on systemic thinking have not been successful in transforming organisations. Nevertheless it seems that at times people like to be able to differentiate between the top, bottom and middle structures of organisation (see also Sandelands and Boudens, 2000). My experience of creating new organisations (see previous section) resonates with much of what Shaw says. However I think that self-organising within an existing system is very different from initiating or gestating the birth of new organisations. In existing organisations there is less freedom of thought because there are tons more history and baggage that will be carried through existing relationships.

Oshrey (Oshrey, 1995) describes the usual relations between the top, middle and bottoms as most often engaged in the 'Dance of the Blind Reflex' (DBR) with the people in these positions engaged in an episodic or chronic dance that traps fixed behaviours (and conversations) within the system. Understanding the patterning of the interactions, seeing the old dance, liberates interactions between people and groups, systems thinking enables people to choose the dance they wish to dance:

*'Partners in creation...*

The challenge in stepping out of the Dance  
is for Tops and Bottoms –  
each side bringing its unique  
experiences,  
knowledge,  
and skills –  
to become co-creators of the system –

the classroom,  
the team,  
the department,  
the organisation,  
the meeting,  
the family,  
the nation,  
the world;  
sharing responsibility for its success  
and its failures  
in each moment  
and in the long term' (Oshrey, 1995 p.68).

Facilitation tools develop awareness, connection and conversation between different parts of the system, and working with systems, these tools are variously called Market Place, Café Society, Open Space, Future Search. I have used 'mapping your system' as a management tool. It helps everyone involved to learn more about where they are in their landscape and gives us an opportunity to be more reflexive about our own meaning making. As I draw the mandalas of the lotus flower, of the mandala of possibility, that is what I am doing, mapping my mental frame as I imagine my 'system' inside my head. I guess it might depend on how individual learning takes place, whether spatial models make sense – or not.

Oshrey's work does a lot to enable people to test their assumptions, become more aware of how certain decisions are made, and as a result make better choices about the way organisational life happens. This work is not just about changing what people say to each other, but about opening out and giving more information about organisational processes, and as such would seem to be of value in appropriate circumstances.

'And then there is this other path – more difficult to discern; we are unclear as to where it leads, hesitant to take the first step. And rightly so. That first step requires great humility. Maybe, in our system blindness, we have been wrong about these others; maybe in sliding from one dance or the other, we have misjudged them. Maybe it was great folly for us to hate others, fear them, separate ourselves from them, escape from them, avoid them, dominate them,



hurt them, oppress them, destroy them. May be it was all a terrible mistake. And may be we are still doing it.

So that is the test. To see systems or be blind to them. The costs of blindness are clear. Who knows what the possibilities "seeing" holds for us' (Oshrey, 1995 p.204).

I think that this leads to the same place that Shaw starts from, working with the unknown from the place where you already are in the organisation. When freed from 'system blindness' it then becomes possible to let the values created in the act of relating to shine through the practice, and following this there is the more subtle work of capturing the nature of those relationships by sharing the stories that are told after the event. Then the cycle returns, of recounting the stories in practice, and so on in cycles of action (practice) and reflection (story telling).

This means that the worth of what we do together may only emerge, become tangible, in the longer rather than the shorter term. Like realising the worth of the 'good' teacher from school days, or the effect of my initial meditation teaching, it may take time to understand the nature of what was given or the value of the work that we did / do together. Over time, the influence of conversations and relationships are reflected in the extent to which those values continue to live on, either in organisational terms or in the continuance of those cultural values that were given form through its inception. My words are formed through an initial sensing which creates patterns; the effects of language come through the timbre of my voice, through the attunement of my words/ voice with my body/mind. These form the resonances, in the space, the air that lies between us, which will echo authenticity or inauthenticity and will show my real meanings and values to you as I speak.

## THE FOURTH ITERATION: REFLECTION

### Connecting the emotional landscape of interaction with spiritual practice

In writing about relationship and agape I am coming home to myself. After years of learning the 'right' way to behave in organisations – and thus of putting my 'self' to one side – I am coming back into my embodied understanding, my heartfelt understanding, of connection and relationship through relational practice at work. In this inquiry I have given myself an opportunity to liberate my thinking.

Whereas the erotic impulse to life creates the potential of the mandala of possibility through the dynamic of contradiction just as the sap rises in the stem of the lotus flower from the muddy waters of the lake, now I imagine the dynamic of interdependence enabling the thousand petals of the lotus flower to open in relation to each other. This happens, apparently at random, each petal opening in relation to some other mysterious opening. It is neither linear nor predictable. Only when the petals open can I see the connection between them and begin to make sense of what has been happening. This centripetal movement, this petal-opening life affirming energy is what I know as agape.

The relational aspect of love involves an emotional and spiritual elasticity where the 'self' is identified and defined by its interaction with other selves unbounded by any particular cognitive framework or mental map.

Feeling is fluid that's obvious if I am laughing and end up weeping, or if I start angry and finish peaceful. This is not a creative exchange process like reading and thinking because I cannot be angry and peaceful at the same time, and I am dominated by whichever feeling state is the stronger. Feelings do not have permeable boundaries like thoughts, and feeling states are able to exclude all thoughts and desires that do not align with the current emotion. I know that because when they are strong they take over my body and my thoughts. So to become like joy when not feeling joyful, I need to understand how my mind works, to notice the action of the mind. I must develop an embodied sense of stretching where my feeling mind moves into a different mode of being, unwilling but willingly, using my will and my sense memory of love, to move the mind and take up a different more joyful form.

Watching the action of the mind and body in meditation, I begin to witness the relatively mindless repetition of action and reaction, which is called the ego or the *Ahamkara* in Sanskrit and that socially constructed 'I' loses much of its meaning making capacity. As I ask the question, 'Who am I?' and look at events and emotions with dispassion, this witnessing reveals a deeper feeling level within which shows me the underbelly of my action and the deeper purposes of my relationship making.

Pretending to be joyful, acting joyfulness, gives the mind permission to shift its expectations, and seeing the way the mind works, creates an opening, a shift to the possibility that there might be a layer underneath (or above) the everyday mind where this Mind is always peaceful and serene. In opening to the possibility that the mind is just like any other organ of the body, and its action can be witnessed like any other organ, like the hands or the breath, creates a release in the brain.

I practise looking at the action of the mind as it contemplates an object. This is *Dharana* 'concentration', becoming engrossed in an object, a flower or candle flame to the exclusion of everything else. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> Limb of yoga, practising reaching a state of equilibrium in thought and feeling, enabling the mind to absorb the object of contemplation:

'Through the cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy and indifference to pleasure and pain, virtue and vice respectively, the consciousness becomes favourably disposed, serene and benevolent. ...

This sutra asks us to rejoice with the happy, to be compassionate to the sorrowful, friendly with the virtuous, and indifferent to those who continue to live in vice despite attempts to change them...' (Sutra 1.33, Iyengar 1993 p.80) .

This is cultivating a change of character. Ideas about changing individual personality tend to be deeply resisted by most non-religious Westerners, but it is contained in Christianity as well as the eastern traditions. In Christianity it is described thus:

'When I look on the world as something focussing on me, when I look on God as something functioning usefully in my philosophy, then I am imprisoned in myself, and I cannot give or receive true and compassionate love. When God in this terrible darkness breaks through, he begins to displace and destroy that dominating manipulating self; then he sets me free to be loved and to give myself to him and to my brothers and sisters' (Williams, 1994 p.99).

In seeking communion with God we must let ourselves be made by God, 'because we can't complete ourselves' (ibid. p.153).

Changing the self is analogous to the body becoming like a mountain or the synaesthesia of making music or dissolving into the sense of the sublime. From that space I am in love with the whole world and the world loves me. I am the world.

In Hinduism, submission to the will of the guru is a practise for this collapse of the self into the Self. I could not even contemplate this without, at the same time, holding agape, the sensation of fostering growth, secure within my embodied knowing. This nurturing is my vehicle for giving up the self.

To give an example of what I mean by submission, I have drawn my interpretation<sup>2</sup> of a talk given by my meditation teacher. Here there is complete surrender to God at the heart of love, which is surrounded by equanimity, reverence, quietude and faith.

- Equanimity (noted incorrectly in the drawing as equality) leads to endurance of pain and suffering – surely there are times when one should protect oneself? This difference of opinion is based on the meaning that I take from the language, and what I do with this is to hold the paradoxical nature of the understanding, which over a period of time, might give me an understanding of what this particular teaching about equality might mean.
- Having endurance means that failure should not be taken as an indication of Divine Will. This has been very helpful to me. By showing me what I need to learn, failure is also an opportunity for learning, and

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<sup>2</sup> In Chapter One, on page 19

a test of determination. Failure is to be overcome and not to be dwelt upon unduly.

- Reverence brings respect and an ability to receive what is given and is connected in my mind with humility, which prepares me to be an instrument of peace and faith. And trying to remember that 'What is for the best will happen' and to remain faithful to that rather than worrying about reaching my idealised outcomes is a practice for my every day living.
- Quietude is so much silence that nothing disturbs the tranquil mind, is not that a wonderfully peaceful performance target, and an interesting contradiction to Eros? Do I want peace or do I want excitement, and which did I choose today?
- Surrender is plasticity to the Divine Will, so that eventually the result is certain.

So what became of integrity, of that inner sounding board that I have relied upon to gauge the truth, surely I am shifting the sands of meaning too far, to understand the world not through my eyes, but through someone else's?

But if I listen, integrity begins to speak back to me. Jim Dodge describes this process in relation to writing novels:

'Another artistic peak is the mysterious point where you amass enough momentum that you stop telling the story and the story begins telling you. ...what the Muses seem to favour for getting out of your mind is a concentration so ferocious and total that you seem to disappear. And yet while the writer has surrendered his or her imagination to the story, some part must still make, by my careful count, 257 exquisitely difficult aesthetic decisions per second about diction, usage, sonics, punctuation, and a few hundred other craft choices required for coherence, compatibility and clarity. If you have to stop and wonder whether a semi-colon is called for, or if a Mountie would use the expression "Your brain is like a baked dude" in 1934, your pure concentration on the story flowing through you is shattered. To sustain imaginative engagement, especially for the months or years required for a novel, craft must be a reflex, and that only comes with years of dedicated practice, practice, practice; and dedication is meaningless without discipline, and discipline without honest desire becomes an empty drill' (Dodge, 2004 p.31).

Practising with this level of skill and concentration and being able to see that I am being 'done' by the story (or the yoga posture) calls for humility. By focussing on agape with reverence, respect and humility I am able to be more watchful, to notice the flow, able to 'go with the flow', to allow quietude to pervade my speech and my work so that the mind is less disturbed.

I find that if I act 'as if' I am joyful but without awareness then I may not notice that I am pumping myself up with self-aggrandisement, and there can be unpleasant consequences. My continued and obstinate resistance to acting with joyfulness is ultimately met with my 'will'. Here my will becomes my desire to accept and move beyond failure, to act differently, step out of the patterns that hold me, so that my personality becomes crafted by joy.

What I am aiming to do is to become joyfulness itself, to surrender to joy so that it acts through me but does not belong to me, is not mine, does not serve my purposes but rather that I serve Joy. It is like the yoga postures, practise the asanas, and one day they 'do' you. If manufacturing the great virtues brings a semblance of joy into my heart, then this 'deep acting' is preparing the heart and the soul for awareness of the Higher Self. As this quality of attention to myself and to my relationship with others goes deeper, so it is likely that my capacity to act well in the world increases.

My small experience of this joy is of a heartfelt feeling clarity like the pure water of a mountain stream; it is cold but feels comfortable, not cold to the senses but light and translucent.

So this embodied knowing takes me from a physical and emotional experience into an inner feeling level and into the heart. It informs cognition, which lies at the outer edge of the socially constructed surface of my self, and then going deeper inwards I find the no-Self (the witness) and make preparation for awareness of the Real Self as it lies hidden in the heart.

'The Self is hidden in the Lotus of the heart...' (Easwaran, 1987 p.183).

And I know that it has taken me many years to learn about, believe and trust in the power that emerges through relationship, that I have often refused to let go and trust that co-creating with others brings its own results.

### Summary

In the first reflective iteration, I develop a sensed connection with agape through the interpretative embodied frame of joyfulness. I justify this with reference to Spinoza (Damasio 2003), and link it to unconditional positive regard in relationship as defined by Carl Rogers (1961).

In the following iteration, I take Fletcher's (2001) theory of relational practice and consider my leadership practice from this perspective. I do this by referring to the action accounts of practice in Chapter Seven and in this Chapter, and as I review my actions through the lens of relational practice, I continue my critique of Torbert's Leadership Development Framework. I go on to suggest that awareness of the emotional landscape of interaction is an integral aspect of living systemic thinking (Marshall, 2004).

I then consider how emotion in conversations contributes to job satisfaction and the development of organisational life. I refer to the complexity of communicating on affective, embodied and cognitive levels, and refer to the potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation that this carries. I provide a case example of a satisfying conversation, which compares with my failure to communicate well in Case Example given in Chapter Ten. There is also a comparison to be made with Case Example One 'Working with Contradiction in an Inquiry Group', where communication broke down completely. It was these examples that I reflected upon as my inquiry was developing.

In the third reflection, I develop my ideas about how relationships can influence organisational structures, suggesting in the first instance that relationship can have a direct impact on structure. In the second instance I refer to how clarifying relationships can allow the 'organisational dance' to be creative rather than be bound by the 'blind reflex' of existing roles and systems (Oshrey, 1995). In comparison with eros, which is contained by rules, agape flexes the boundaries of fixed organisational conventions.

The potential elasticity of agape is covered in the final iteration, where I link love to submission to the 'other'. When I was writing and discussing this in peer supervision this concept was considered deeply repellent. But I am bound by the logic of love, in which I have immersed myself. The idea of surrender to the will of another is the rational logic of sacrifice and surrender, referred to earlier in

Chapter Five. In the same way that the erotic superabundance of love must be curtailed by convention, so agape's superabundance must be curtailed by the conventional boundaries of relationship that require each of us to see ourselves as separate agents. The relevant point here is that agape allows us to 'lose' our identity in the action, as shown in the above quote from Jim Dodge (2004) and as demonstrated in the experience of headstand in Chapter Six.

The action account at the beginning of this Chapter shows:

- That the methodology I employ combines first person action research practice with daily spiritual practice.
- That I choose to wait for the 'right' moment to act. It means that I tend to place emphasis on and value relationship and context, rather than on doing the 'right' thing as a matter of principle regardless of circumstance.

These reflective writings arise from my immersion in joyfulness as the embodied expression of agape. They relied on my journalled accounts of my leadership practice in WHHA and in NHH. Again, the ordering principles of language show the dynamical flow of thoughts, as they arise from my agape influenced reasoning. As I summarise this Chapter I begin to appreciate the complexity of this loving practice. Through my reflexive writing I learn about the capacity that agape has for challenging established 'habitus', the generative and degenerative power of relationship in organisational culture and structure, the variety of ways with which individuals construe and construct meaning from conversation, and the value of reducing the boundaries of self to become absorbed in action.



## PART THREE: PRACTICE

### CHAPTER NINE

#### A PEDAGOGY OF PRESENCE

*In this chapter, in a further reflection, I distil and crystallise my learning, by referring to my Embodied Knowledge (in Chapter Six), Eros and Organisation (in Chapter Seven) and Agape and Organisation (in Chapter Eight). Here, I go on to develop my embodied living educational theory as I clarify how I can become an instrument of love through pedagogy of presence.*

*Later, in Chapter Eleven, I provide an account of practice, which supports these claims.*

#### **Letting love show me the way**

I have used the inner / outer dynamic in various ways throughout the thesis, referring to Wilbur's (1995) inflow and outflow, Marshall's inner and outer arcs of attention (Marshall 2001), Marshall's living systemic thinking (Marshall 2004) and Ruddick's fostering growth (1989). I have been looking for learning points, for the moments of coalescence (Bortroft 1996) between the inner and the outer, whether this refers to movements in my inner body, or movement between the inner world of the self and outer social world.

My spiritual practice teaches me the discipline of becoming an instrument of the body and I reflect and learn how this embodied knowledge is transmitted to others. I use the transformational nature of love, applying the concept of maternal thinking and maternal activity, as does Fletcher (1999), in my reflections on how love influences my organisational practice.

From eros arises greater awareness of the effects of desire in leadership practice, its motivating energy, its search for completion through achievement, its potential lack of respect for other, its capacity to ignore flow.

From agape arises greater awareness of relationship, appreciation of the action of emotion and feeling, its desire for wholeness by surrendering to the other, the potential for confusion if diplomacy is perceived as leadership weakness.

I have brought eros and agape into a leadership narrative, and find that they share an abiding concern with the dialectical, with what happens when idealism and relationship meet with an opposing force. If eros remembers the pleasure to be had in the dynamic of contradiction, then the potential of erotic energy is harnessed in collaboration. If agape remembers to respect the boundaries between self and other, the discursive gap between the known and the unknown in relationship becomes a place of joint learning.

The control of desire in the 5<sup>th</sup> Limb of yoga helps me to harness the forces of eros and helps me to achieve my aim, although not necessarily to reach the exact target originally envisaged. The practice of concentration in the 6<sup>th</sup> Limb of yoga helps me to notice the value of relational spaces, to pause before I speak, to appreciate the implications of standing in another's shoes.

In seeking to become an instrument of love, I prepare for my understanding of love to change in the enaction of my duties and for my experience of love to change me. I do not hold fixed meanings, but seek to recognise the inclusional flow of love across the boundaries between self, other and the cultural context of our relating.

I have flexed the boundaries between feeling, thinking and practice, employing reflective writing and the ordering principles of language and silence. In this way I have created the potential for bringing more of my understanding of love into my practice. It is this blurring of boundaries using a hermeneutical and phenomenological approach that has enabled me to clarify and alter my understanding of what love means.

I considered the anomalies, the discursive gaps in my understanding, realising that creative synthesis arises from seeking to see the whole, to meet the unknown in the gaps between my cognitive knowing and felt experience. I expected that I would also be influenced and influence our shared understanding of what love means across boundaries whose insulated thickness is variable. I am building on the concept of Marshall's (2004) living systemic thinking, thinking

about how the (o)ntological self, the Complex Self as defined by Rayner (2004) changes in, and has influence in, the social world.

This is an inclusional practical inquiry that flexes the boundaries between self, other and our shared symbolic landscapes

'Inclusionality is that space, far from passively surrounding and isolating discrete massy objects, is a vital dynamic inclusion, within and around permeating all natural forms across all scales allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication. Correspondingly boundaries are not fixed limits – smooth, space-excluding, Euclidean lines or planes – but rather are pivotal places comprising complex, dynamic arrays of voids and relief that both emerge from and pattern the co-creative togetherness of inner and outer domains... (Rayner, 2003)

The way that I have inquired has enabled me to develop the relation between the 'I' that acts in the world; and the 'eye' of consciousness, the observer of the inner world. My mind looks both ways, there is the self that has been constructed by living in a participative world and the self whose soul feels almost as old as the hills.

My inquiry brings my knowledge of love into the academy through propositional knowing and into my practice through the dynamical boundaries between self and other. The boundary between 'me and we' is the pivotal place where resonances and dissonances are both felt and dispersed into the relational flow. If I feel and act with love, this understanding leaks through the boundary of the self into the inclusional flow, and is returned to me. In the resonance of the return, my understanding of love is clarified.

Here, in the pivotal place between boundaries, I see eros thickening the insulation of the boundary and exercising power in the way that structures organisational culture, and I see agape reducing the insulation of the boundary and influencing organic growth of organisational culture. Poised in the moment of coalescence, I realise divine love as an integrating energy that enables me to see the part as the whole.

## **Pedagogy**

In seeking to pedagogise my knowledge of love I realise that this knowledge is transmitted through my body, through physical presence as well as through speech. In Chapter Six I showed how I use the explicit pedagogy of language, demonstration and touch when teaching yoga. I go on to show how this includes an implicit pedagogy, encouraging increased awareness of the student's own inner body. And then I show how I seek to pass on my tacitly held knowledge through an embodied intention to transmit the qualities of silence. In this way I have demonstrated how my body is a significant aspect of the transmission context in which pedagogic communication takes place.

Drawing together my embodied knowledge with my later reflections on loving leadership in Chapters Seven and Eight, my tacit, embodied knowledge has been verbalised through the accounts of action and the subsequent reflections. In this way my tacit pedagogy has become implicit. Using the ordering principles of language and silence in conjunction with cycles of action and reflection, I have recognised my 'unthinking' previously unacknowledged embodiment of love, and as a consequence I have come to understand how I might become an instrument of love. Now, in the final stages of my inquiry, I claim to bring love into action through a pedagogy of presence, and in describing my method and evaluating my actions this pedagogy has been made discernible.

Learning with love through action is an internal reordering that enables my tacit knowledge to come into action without my necessarily thinking about it. Love is invisible and implicitly held as I perceive the relation between 'the impulse to move and the movement ... the intention to think and an impulse to think' (Bohm, 1996 p.25). I think that this tacit reordering enables love to pass through my intention and into action within the pedagogic relation.

## **The recontextualising field**

The purpose of this inquiry is to reframe experience and recontextualise organisational discourse, using 'recontextualise' in Bernstein's (Bernstein, 2000)

sense of redefining and transforming the ideological field in which practise takes place. Most of Bernstein's theories are concerned with the macro politics of State and education but in so doing he also addresses the symbolic ways in which identity is formed. In relation to recontextualising principles he says this:

'The pedagogic discourse to be acquired is constructed by the recontextualising process of the transmitter(s) which creates a specific modality of the specialised knowledge to be transmitted and acquired. The acquirer rarely has access to the transmitter(s) recontextualising principle, but this principle is tacitly transmitted and is invisibly active in the acquirer as his/her 'gaze' which enables the acquirer metaphorically to look at (recognise) and regard, and evaluate (realise) the phenomena of legitimate concern' (Bernstein, 2000 p. 173).

I do not expect to speak **about** love at work, but seek to express love tacitly in the way that Bernstein describes above. As an instrument of love's purpose, I let my 'gaze' follow love's resonant direction. As a leader, what I notice and what I consider important has influence. I think that the effect of love can be expressed in the way I work with others, and the way that our relation contributes to, and influences, organisational culture.

I am careful not to start out with an explicit discourse of love because it will be divorced from my embodied knowing and my silent practice, and thus likely to serve my own egoistic ends. What I seek to do is to bring love through the resonant boundary between myself as a 'distinct place'<sup>1</sup> and the 'contextual space' in which I work with others. This is inclusional action that has social impact if space is seen as presence rather than as an absence. If space is perceived as presence, then it is 'a vital, dynamic inclusion within, around and permeating natural form across all scales of organisation, allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication' (Rayner, 2004b)<sup>2</sup>. This means that my tacit knowledge of love is not only brought into a social relation, but contains the potential to recontextualise the organisational field in which I work. In this way my (o)ntology is brought into my action through embodied presence.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Distinct place' is a way of describing the changing nature of 'discrete objects' that we usually perceive as fixed, 'Contextual space' refers to movement of spaces between 'distinct places' once the boundaries between them are seen as dynamic, on page 66

<sup>2</sup> The mathematical basis of Rayner's theory is discussed in Chapter Two, page 65

Now I am refining what the 'mandala of possibility' looks like, seeing it form from a deeper level. It is as if the insulation that conventionally binds us in our separate social roles is loosened and modulated by our common humanity and through this the usual classifications of social discourse become open to revision.

### **How do I know that tacit pedagogy is ethically sound?**

Is divine love above the Law? Yes, the poet (Auden, 1976) and the philosopher (Ricoeur, 1996) both agree.

Are my mandalic imaginings above the Law? In the context of organisation most definitely not. So does that mean that I am bound in my professional practice by the rules of convention? Most definitely not! So, let me examine my position further.

Most of my decision making is malleable, sometimes changing position as I understand more about what I am doing, at the same time knowing that once I have made a decision I need (most times) to follow through, to finish, to complete the logic of it.

Other than staying logical within the decision itself, surely I have fixed points, a place from which to distinguish right from wrong action?

What I have learned about 'goodness' through this writing, is how much I value unity and rely on the harmonic resonance of mind, body and spirit to guide my decision-making. Writing about the activities of leadership I have described an inclusive process that incorporates the dynamic and clash of differences and similarities when I work with others in organisations. I aim for an Hegelian synthesis that is not based on a fixed universal referent, but on generating a sense of shared wholeness and satisfaction as we work.

Realising this I now understand why I applaud Archbishop Rowan Williams for his decision around the appointment of openly gay but celibate, or practising homosexual Anglican clergy to bishopric in the Church of England. I see him making a decision to put Church unity above sexual orientation, whilst encouraging the Church leaders remaining in conflict to keep talking.

Faced with a decision that could not please everyone, Rowan Williams chose collective wisdom above individual passions. Not a very politically correct decision, but in my opinion, very wise.

Some months after I had written this paragraph about the non-appointment of Jeffrey John to a Bishopric, it was announced that he was to be appointed to some elevated position in the St Albans diocese, the diocese in which I live. I happened to be in Church that Sunday when the Vicar read out a letter from the Bishop. It asked parishioners to turn to the Bible for guidance if they were troubled by the appointment, and I thought, yes, that is one of the purposes of religious practice, to help us change the habitual ways we look at the world. (Journal June 2004)

Then later I saw an interview published in the newspaper where this issue (amongst others) was discussed, and this is what Rowan Williams said about his decision:

'unity is a principle...it is all to do with a calculation that goes something like this. The decision was one that ruptured a whole set of relationships which are not about structural harmony but about mutual learning and mutual giving – relationships let's say between churches in the developing world and the Church here or the Church in the States. To rupture those relations would be bad for the Church not as an institution but as a community...making people feel they have not been taken seriously.' He then added with admirable humility, 'I recognise the argument of unity versus principle and it stings. It goes deep' (Hattersley, 2004).

### **Pedagogy of presence**

I have made it clear (in Chapter Two) that taking unity as a principle in my search for wholeness does not mean ignoring contradiction or difference, or imposing my meanings on others. Instead it means working at the boundaries between self and other to create new meaning and renewed relationship. In knowing love as a transformational energy capable of changing meanings, I now understand how I can become an instrument of love. I can do this, not by following the meaning of words, or re-interpreting conventions, but by following the directional resonance

of my embodied knowing. I have described this process in Chapter Six when 'teaching' relaxation in the yoga class:

'Every class varies, and I do not plan what I say. I encourage a letting go of the body, awareness of the breath, awareness of feeling, awareness of thought ... It is a preparation for meditation, but I do not explicitly say this. ... I want to pass on a sense of what I understand about the ordering principle of silence. ... I call this tacit pedagogy, because it is not conscious transmission rather it is an intention to transmit a way of coming into stillness. I have a sense of love and care as I utter the words ' (Chapter Six, pp. 186-187)

I aim to let love be the 'secondary quality'<sup>3</sup> of my leadership activity as I hold the embodied sensed memory of divine love. It is this embodiment that enables me to develop my capacity to envisage harmony beyond contradiction. This embodied memory becomes manifested as 'presence'. It is not a thought process. This presence is in the discursive gap, it is the 'presence in absence' of inclusionality, the relational space between the known and the unknown.

I let love lead my actions on organisational issues as I foster the growth of the organisations in which I work. And I seek to clarify these meanings and improve my loving practice through the ordering principles of silence derived from spiritual practise, and through the ordering principles of language derived from reflecting upon my journalled accounts of action.

Housing Associations in general, are organisations that are constantly changing and developing in response to Government policy initiatives and the needs of the financial markets. The associations that I work in are learning organisations in a state of continuous improvement, constantly adapting their services and organisational structures. Leaders in housing associations are always developing and creating new ways of doing things, moving across the discursive gap from the known to the unknown. Developing effective ways of communicating is necessarily an intrinsic aspect of leadership activity. It is in this context that I practice a pedagogy of presence. Through the pedagogisation of my embodied knowledge I can become an instrument of love's purpose, and allow love to influence my leadership activity.

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<sup>3</sup> By this I mean the hermeneutical quality from which my actions arise.



### **My embodied living educational theory**

My embodied living educational theory is my explanation of how I learn to improve what I do. It is the result of an emergent process that combines felt experience, with practical knowledge with propositional knowledge, from which developed a form of inquiring that is uniquely mine.

This very individual form melds together spiritual practice and action research methods. It incorporates an embodied, non-verbal knowing with an interpretative subjective approach. It sets out to bring (o)ntology into action, to demonstrate the practical value of 'being'. In developing my embodied living educational theory, I come to know how I know, to develop my (e)pistemology.

My (e)pistemological foundations have been discovered through cycles of action and reflection whilst holding the sensed memory of love in my mind. I have developed this knowledge whilst engaging with others in Inquiry and Peer Group processes. I have evaluated this way of coming to know in action accounts of practice.

My conclusion is that I come to know through my embodied inward resonances and my embodied responses to the social world. That whilst I seek a sense of mutuality and attunement, I also find pleasure in the dynamic of contradiction. That when the sensed memory of love is seen in the discursive gap between resonance and dissonance, this brings a loving presence into that space. That it is the transmission of energy across this gap that I refer to as 'a pedagogy of presence', which becomes a loving presence when the embodied memory of divine love is held in mind.

## PART THREE: PRACTICE

### CHAPTER TEN

#### DIVINE LOVE AND ORGANISATION

*In this chapter I take my experience of stillness, described in Chapter Six, and reflect on the relation of silence with divine love.*

*I give an example that shows how the practise of silence helps me to revise my actions.*

*I use Senge and Scharmer (Senge and Scharmer, 2001) as an exemplar showing how spiritual practice can be used to support a 'deep-listening process' within organisation.*

*I conclude the chapter with a summary of my findings.*

#### **ACTION ACCOUNT: Witnessing**

There is a gap between the in and out breath. I watch that space imagining the in-breath of eros and the out-breath of agape.

There are many places where we can slip out of our everyday world. These places and spaces have existed since time began, they happen as the sun rises and sets each day, at the equinoxes of the year, through rituals and transitions of the human life cycle, and through death.

My understanding of this space is formulated from a mixture of eastern and western philosophy. And an acceptance that there is a way of experiencing the world that is not dependent on sensory perception or on socially constructed frameworks.

I imagine being outside culture and language as an infinite experience arising through a synaesthesia of the senses that goes inwards to the inner body, or through the spaces found between bodies and between times, or in the giving up of identity through sacred ritual. These ways of knowing are outside everyday

experience whilst taking place firmly within the body situated in the material world.

This is how I perceive these spaces:

### **Witnessing**

Above and below, to the right and to the left of my chattering mind  
is the shimmering sea

At the heart of my chattering mind  
is the shimmering sea

This shimmering sea holds and  
is within my chattering mind  
Slowly, quietly and more quietly now.

Watching and listening, more awareness grows  
of that which exists inside and outside my chattering mind  
And as it expands, my mind unlimited becomes the shimmering sea.

(Journal, Autumn 2000)

## THE FIRST ITERATION: REFLECTION

### Reflections on Silence

In Chapter Five I refer to my chance meeting with someone who taught meditation, which eventually led me to an experience of divine love, and who has acted as my spiritual guide for the past 21 years.

In Chapter Six I describe my experience of the relation between stillness and silence in this way:

'Silence arises from stillness, an absence of internal movement, and an absence of power- relation. It is an experience that allows me a glimpse of divine love. Here there is no compulsion, no inner or outer movement; here there is plenty of space and choice. This is where I 'know' my (o)ntology and (e)pistemology. Moments of coalescence occur in that silence, where the parts that I usually experience as separate become whole. This is the effect of the ordering principle of silence, achieved through the transformative nature of love. Love dissolves the boundaries between being and doing, silence discloses the whole, and I become the space' (Chapter Six, page 179).

Silence goes beyond convention, beyond power. In silent space I realise the presence of divine love. When I say that 'silence re-orders my action' I am referring to the transrational, the inexpressible, the mysterious dynamic of divine love. I cannot explain how this re-ordering happens. However, I can show how the practice of silence affects my actions.

### CASE EXAMPLE FIVE: Silent Practice Influencing Action

The events took place at NHH. **I notice the process that I went through, shown in bold.**

**My concern:** I journalled the whole of an event which involved several meetings and a telephone conversation with a fellow Board member with whom I had a serious disagreement on an equal opportunities issue.

**I begin to imagine the solution and explore possibilities:**

I journal:

...I need to reflect on how it might be possible to build bridges....I have a great deal of respect for D's financial expertise and the way that he is willing to speak up in Board meetings.

At this point I drafted the following email but did not send it:

"Just wanted to appreciate your public support for those policies last night. Whilst we might have a difference of opinion on 'Equality and Diversity' issues, there are so many other key issues on which we agree, even for this reason alone I think that it is important to maintain our alliance on the Board. You are a good man David and I would not want this to interfere with our relationship in the long run.

It's a pity that I had to rush off last night; it would have been good to stay for the wine and mince pies.

Did anything interesting happen?

All the best,  
Eleanor"

**I evaluate my imagined solution:**

I have been sitting in 'silence' since I drafted this email. What came to me during this time was:

- That in retrospect, I could have handled the previous sub-committee meeting, and my conversations before the Board meeting, a lot better. I responded too quickly to (a) G not taking 'care' and not responding properly to my email

suggestion and (b) Sending the email to K, C and T. I could have telephoned G, and I could have telephoned C if I had really wanted to resolve the issue, rather than 'prove' someone had acted wrongly.

- Who is this 'self' that wants to see equality, but acts in this way? What does my loving self say?

I have spent at least 2 days on this, not slept for more than 5 hours last night, and the net result is that I have built myself into a ... stereotype ... But then my stereotype of him may be even stronger!

I am responsive first and foremost. I like people for heaven's sake, and if they do not do what I think that they should, I say so quickly – even whilst I am thinking – 'Is this wise?'

Surely the reason I do this because I need to respond if I see injustice? It is a principled reaction. Why does it feel like 'love' has no voice in this situation? Perhaps 'love' here would just be a presence rather than a thought, being clear internally that I oppose utterances that do not give support to those who need it most, but not necessarily saying so? That does not feel right either, that feels like an oppressed silence.

Then I remembered what 'diversity' is about – respecting multiple perspectives. Of course, the more perspectives the better – even old-fashioned ones? More choice, creativity from conflict perhaps. How can I build bridges this way? The principled reaction is not so much about what is 'right' and what is 'wrong', but about finding resolution through relationship.

### **I modify my action:**

I reword and send the following email:

"Just wanted to appreciate your public support for those policies last night, and to say how much I admired seeing you put your private views on one side.

I set out to value all perspectives, and hope that where there are differences of opinion that by seeking to understand others better we create the possibility for agreeing worthwhile and sustainable policies. In retrospect, I think that I could have handled my side of things better than I did. Whilst we have that difference of opinion on 'Equality and Diversity' issues, there seem to be a lot of other issues on which we agree wholeheartedly.

You are a good man ... and I don't want this to interfere with our relationship, and I hope you don't mind my emailing you about this.

It's a pity that I had to rush off last night; it would have been good to stay for the wine and mince pies.

Did anything interesting happen later on?

All the best,

Eleanor"

This example shows how I integrate spiritual practice with my leadership activity, and how I learn from the 'place beyond reason' (Herschel, 1988 p. 1) on an everyday basis. Being unique does not give me a unique purpose; instead, silence gives me a distinctive way of seeing and acting in the world.

## THE SECOND ITERATION: REFLECTION

### The discourse of presence in organisation

Now I reflect on Senge and Scharmer's example of 'quiet preparation' in the 'interior action turn' to support this connection between spiritual practise and leadership practise.

Senge and Scharmer give an account of the tacit influence of silent practice as the 'interior action turn (tacit)' affects the practice of others in the 'exterior action turn (explicit)' (Senge and Scharmer, 2001 p.246) in the Handbook of Action Research:

'The deep-listening interview process...which usually takes three to four hours for each interview, has turned out to be a life-changing event, in the assessment of many interviewees. Asked about the personal practises that allow such a unique conversational atmosphere, the consultant responded, "The most important hour...is the hour prior to the interview," ... For this particular interview, this hour is always reserved for quiet preparation, which involves a combination of reviewing prior thoughts and meditation' (Senge and Scharmer, 2001 pp. 246-247).

Scharmer (Scharmer, 2000) goes beyond linearity to suggest a U-shaped learning loop, describing this as a regenerative process in which the sense of 'I' is lost and individuals enter a common space of emergent knowing. In this new space, created by the merging of individual knowingness, time and action become instantaneous. The action just happens, as enaction in an instant.

'Seeing sensing, presencing and envisioning will not make a difference unless they are translated into action. Brian Arthur sees the way to operate in the new economy as a sequence of (1) observe, observe, observe (2) allow inner knowing to emerge (3) act in an instant. Says Arthur, "In oriental thinking, you might just sit and observe and observe – and then suddenly do what's appropriate. You act from your inner self' (Scharmer, 2000).



Importantly, and similarly to Griffin (2002) and Rayner (2004) Scharmer suggests that we do not think of the emerging wholes as a 'thing':

'Bortroft claims that we cannot know the whole in the same way that we know a thing, for the whole is not a thing. Thus the challenge is to encounter the whole as it *comes into the presence* in the parts' (Scharmer, 2000 [*author's Italics*]).

In this way the parts do not have to know the whole in order to come to know because parts 'show us the way to the whole' (Bortroft quoted in Scharmer, 2000).

'Presencing' the future is enabled through shifting the locus of listening through four different perspectives, and understanding the nature of language through a similar number of frames, which are: talking from politeness, through debate, through inquiry, and on to flow. These listening conversations recontextualise organisational discourse through a pedagogic transmission that deliberately employs sense-making and ethical modalities, outside the usual conventions and organisational norms.

Scharmer's ideas about presencing seem to be a development of Torbert's Four Territories and Fourfold Awareness (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert, 2000). However Scharmer has developed a different articulation of relationship, which includes qualities of silent knowing that are not reliant on reason and cognition.

### Summary

In seeking to develop a leadership practice that fosters the growth and development of people and organisations through love, I use my spiritual practice and action research methods integrated within my everyday living. This is my ordinary way of being, living and learning.

Writing this thesis and developing my living educational theory, I learn more about the transformational aspects of love and the importance of silence. I come to appreciate more fully the part that my embodied knowledge plays in my decision making, and the way that this embodiment can influence others.

I have always understood the importance of daily discipline for the maintenance of my personal identity and stability. However, this inquiry shows me how it is also central to my leadership practice.

At the beginning of my inquiry I thought that I needed to learn new leadership skills<sup>1</sup> but now I can see that spiritual practice is the ground from which these skills will develop when they are needed. My case examples show that spiritual practice does not confirm me in my opinions – quite the contrary – they change the mode of my seeing (my consciousness) so that I am able to see how and why I need to shift. Because of its importance, I have called this shifting process the ‘reordering principle of silence’. It is through this reordering principle that I sense the presence of divine love.

In this thesis I show how the sense memory of divine love can be transposed into and alter my leadership actions through the reordering principle of silence.

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<sup>1</sup> This is one of the reasons why I critique Torbert’s Leadership Development Framework.

## PART FOUR: FINDINGS

### CHAPTER ELEVEN

#### EVALUATING PRACTICE

*In this chapter I summarise my findings. In a further account of current practice I provide evidence to support my claim that love is brought into my professional practice through a pedagogy of presence.*

*I show how the quality of my practice has improved as I continue to ask the question, 'How may I become an instrument of love's purpose?'*

#### SUMMARISING MY FINDINGS:

I have combined journalling and spiritual practice to bring an intimate and non-verbal experience of love into professional practice. I have brought this inner felt experience into language taking a phenomenological approach and I have immersed myself in the relation between physical, emotional and spiritual knowledge. I have analysed the movement of knowledge between the personal and the social in the language of inclusionality, and shown how social relations mediate my inner non-verbal experience.

I situate my method within the action research paradigm and my philosophy within a holistic and subjectivist frame. As I write I realise my knowledge in the relation between thinking and the act of writing.

My knowledge and its production are deliberately value-laden. I cultivate reasoned emotion in order to influence my thought process.

I judge the worth of my action and its loving dimension in silent reflective spiritual practice. I judge the worth of my action and its loving dimension in the feedback I

get from others and its relation to my standards of judgement. These standards are:

- to recontextualise (reframe) what I am and we are doing now; so that our joint work can become easier and more pleasurable.
- to inspire and support relational based strategies and inclusive decision-making within organisations
- to bring a resonance, a flavour of harmony linking the practical and invisible spaces in which we participate.

These criteria are focussed on seeking harmony and wholeness, but they do not ignore challenge and difference.

I have reviewed issues of contradiction and synthesis in western philosophy and argue that the creative dynamism arising from difference is an important component of love at work.

I conclude that love is the medium in which personal growth and social change takes place, and that it is possible to transmit an embodied understanding of love through a pedagogy of presence. This pedagogy may be explicit, but is often implicit and on occasion, tacit.

Following Bernstein, I argue that the resonances of love are transmitted across the boundaries between people as well as the boundaries between individuals and organisational structures. I maintain that it is the thickness of the insulation of these boundaries that determines how much of love's resonance flows into my practice.

## **EXAMPLE OF CURRENT PRACTICE**

In this example I apply my first person inquiry methodology and show how I bring the ordering principle of silence and the ordering principles of language into action, as I seek to bring a pedagogy of loving presence into my practice as a non-Executive Director and Chair of the Board of a housing association.

## **CASE EXAMPLE SIX**

### **Chairing the Board at NHH**

The first action and reflection cycle concerns my preparations for meeting with the CE (Chief Executive) prior to the Board meeting at which I was elected Chair. The second cycle gives an account of the Board meeting and subsequent meeting with the CE.

#### **1. The first cycle**

##### **Preparing for election as Chair**

### **REFLECTION**

Using Whitehead's (1989) form, I seek to identify my concerns. I am excited by the prospect of getting involved in a new area of housing, and I ask myself, 'What does NHH want from its Chair?'

#### **Eros**

NHH wants to develop a reputation in the region for excellence, either in selling neighbourhoods services and /or by building new homes and communities. I imagine what this might mean, holding the vision of 'carving' a place for NHH in the East of England region firmly, erotically, in my mind ...

- I need to know more about the organisation's potential for collaboration – what is it good at - and what the competition is like.
- I need to understand the context, the environment, the players operating in the region.
- I also need to know more about the current thinking on procurement partnerships and the Housing Corporation's current recommendations on the legal frameworks for mergers and developing 'Umbrella Organisations'.

I reflect on my list, then I gather together specific areas that will underpin my thinking as I carry out my tasks as Chair.

I act in the direction of this solution by making another list:

- Governance, we need to streamline decision-making. What is the best way of doing this? We are becoming an Industrial and Provident Society, does this mean that we have to change our Constitution?
- Who has contact, and at what level, with other housing associations?
- What conferences and forums does NHH attend? Do we offer speakers at conferences?
- Do we have an appropriate staff structure in the Development Department? How can we continue our ambitious development programme and begin to develop new housing and / or sell maintenance services?

### **Agape**

What does this mean for relationship? I write another list.

- developing a relationship with the Chief Executive that enables me to understand how he works.
- getting to know more about what the industry is saying to itself about building strategic alliances
- developing a resonant 'feel' for what other organisations are doing.

I put these 'to do' lists on one side. I evaluate my ideas, sitting in silence and meditating.

I write a further list:

- Decision making on the Board must be improved, we must become, 'an effective decision-making force!' We need to enjoy our meetings, bond a little more, make a few jokes, and allow ourselves to ask possibly stupid questions.
- I will get involved in Board recruitment and induction.
- I want to improve the status of tenant members in Board discussions.
- Must find some way of encouraging two of the senior management team to improve their performance at Board meetings. They need to enjoy the challenge of our questions and not be paranoid.
- Find a way of including the tenant voice in reports to the Board. We must be more open and more inclusive.

- Make sure we have high quality recruits to the Board – I am already thinking about the Chair's succession already! We do not have enough suitable candidates. I do not want to do this job for more than two years.

### **ACTION**

I act in the direction of the 'to do' lists when I meet the Chief Executive a few days later.

I make the following notes:

His key issues for the next 12 months were:

- He wants the Board to be more focussed
- To build strategic alliances with other HA's in the following ways...

Development alliances with O.... and / or A....

Interconnection of services – depot / maintenance, RtB and leasing.

Attend all the Good Practice forums

K and V are going to the NHF conference

K to the CIH / or NHF CE's conference

K to EoE CIH conference

B to LSVT finance conference

2-5 year strategy

- Review of sheltered housing – 20 schemes including 4 extra care schemes that need to be improved. Board will be making decisions in the next 12-18 months.
- Staff satisfaction – K justifies PRP on the basis that it enables staff to see how what they do is dependant on others performing.

Criteria for measuring the success of PRP are:

Staff morale

Staff and customer satisfaction surveys

Performance against operational plan

## REFLECTION

I evaluate our meeting and reflect on my notes. As part of my everyday practice, I sit in silence and meditation. My thoughts emerge.

- How am I going to lead the association into the next phase of the cultural shift from a local authority housing department to a market driven housing association?

Again, I hold a sense of what agape means in relationship, its flexibility, and its willingness to go where linear logic might not.

## 2. The second cycle: Chairing the Board at NHH

### REFLECTION

#### Eros

I sit in silence. I meditate. I see myself acting in the role of Chair. I am afraid, my chairing skills are not especially good, and I worry about getting the papers muddled up. I am afraid of being challenged.

I know I need to focus on eros. At the previous Board meeting people were referring to me as 'the Boss'! I try to imagine what 'being the boss might feel like'. Agendas and reports begin arrive in the post. I read them. I make careful notes. I know that I need to be efficient.

I sit in meditation. I imagine a solution and I realise that

- I should acknowledge the enormous achievements that the staff have achieved in the 2 years since the transfer of stock. I need to refer (lightly) to developing strategic alliances to indicate my vision for NHH's future.
- I must take the reins and establish myself in the leadership role by developing a clear framework within which business is conducted.
- Later, I will indicate more clearly future direction, because I will feel the resonance of flow and its direction better. But as yet there is only a subtle movement in that direction. A direction of thought, an undercurrent not yet fully articulated or crystallised in action.



I begin to sense the energy of eros in my mind and body

### **Agape**

I sit in silence. I meditate. I imagine the emotional landscape of interaction.

I think about the individual Board members. Perhaps I need to start challenging them, encouraging them to be freer with their opinions. I reflect on the possibility of saying things like, 'SY, you're our legal expert – what do you think?' But it might be a bit risky.

Again, I have an embodied sense of what an opening up of existing relationships on the Board might mean, not just in Board meetings but in the longer term for the organisation's culture. This feels like a big cultural change. It will take time. This is the relational presence of agape.

### **ACTION**

I act in the direction of my solution. There is a jokey, jolly mood around the table. I am firm and relaxed. I get the papers muddled! I close the meeting at 9.00pm, which is good!

There are two agenda items I deliberately show particular interest in, Board recruitment and Customer Care. Both reports are focussed in the direction of my aim to improve the status and involvement of tenant Board members. There is an active, involved Board discussion on both.

- I am careful to watch and encourage remarks from tenant Board members. They all sign up for involvement in the Board recruitment process and suggest more informal ways of informing prospective candidates of their responsibilities.
- There is a long and rather aimless discussion about the Customer Care Strategy that I think demonstrated that the Board was getting tired. I wanted to call a comfort break, but lacked the courage!

## REFLECTION

I evaluate my actions by sitting in silence, and meditating..

## ACTION

I meet the chief executive two days later. We arrange dates for Board recruitment, and I take his advice on timing, how the selection process will be handled and agree target dates for new members to join the Board.

At the end of the meeting he emphasises the good work that the association is doing on Customer Care. He expresses this differently to the way it was reported at the Board meeting.

I make a note to reread the report and to consider why I did not pick up on the new organisational structures that had been put in place to support the strategy. Perhaps I missed it, perhaps the report needed to highlight staffing structures.

I remember that there was an issue about not including staffing or structural implications in a previous strategy document.

I need to check things out and reflect on the possible implications.

I make a note to make sure that the Customer Care strategy is highlighted in other contexts, especially when talking to staff.

I ask him how his meeting went with the CE of another large association. 'Better than expected' he said. This triggers his views on the future potential for partnership working, summarised as:

- **Selling services:**

We have offered IT, HR and Finance services to another new stock transfer association with 4000 homes. We do not plan to make a surplus, we will be satisfied with the resulting reduction in our overheads.

- **Development of new homes:**

We are developing 700 new homes over the next three years with two other associations as our agents. We have the financial capacity to increase our borrowing capacity to £200million in three years time, that will enable us to develop over 1000 new homes without government grant.

This level of financial security is remarkable. It means that we do not need to join a group structure. I had thought that we had to choose between selling services and becoming a key development player but the Chief Executive was clear that we actually must use the financial capacity that we already have.

I say that I want to go to a regional event advertised for Board members and senior staff. He says he is busy, but then decides he might be able to alter his diary. Either he thinks that he needs to be around, or I am influencing him in to go in a direction that he might not have chosen. I hope it is the latter!

### **REFLECTION**

I sit in silence. I meditate.

I realise that I am getting closer to defining the direction of my leadership activity. The CE is beginning to fill in some of the gaps in my knowledge that I posed in my original lists.

I will learn more at the Regional Conference and we will have an opportunity to develop our relationship.

My next steps will be return to my original questions and prepare for the next cycle of Board meetings.

### **EVALUATING PRACTICE AGAINST MY OWN STANDARDS OF JUDGEMENT**

In this example I follow the form of Whitehead's questions, writing notes about issues I imagine I need to learn about, writing up the results of actions and conversations. Then reflecting on these in my daily spiritual practice, and using the transformational resonances of eros and agape as part of my strategic

thinking, I reconsider and evaluate my accounts. In this way I bring the ordering principle of silence and the ordering principles of language into my practice.

Colouring my thinking with eros, I consider implementation of the organisational vision. Bringing agape alongside my thinking, I consider how to build an effective relationship with the Chief Executive and how relations between Board members might be improved. In this way I plan to create new vision and purpose, to emphasise the value of relationship building through the way that I Chair meetings. I consider how I might influence others by using the power of my position in the organisational structure to focus on the preparation of particular reports and joint tasks.

I am deliberately seeking to re-frame and recontextualise the work of the Board by focussing my attention in particular directions, and embodying an enquiring and relational approach. I hold the idea of 'increasing tenant involvement in NHH' as a part of myself, waiting for opportunities to enact these ideas. This is how I apply my embodied knowledge, and embody a pedagogy of presence.

For example, at the end of one of our meetings I am given an opportunity to go to a regional event and decide to go. As a consequence of this decision, the Chief Executive also decides to attend. I prepare for this event, and use it as an opportunity for learning about the regional context and the direction that NHH's might move into. I hope that there will be potential for strengthening the relationship between the CE and myself and an opportunity to see how he networks with other key players in the region.

I evaluate my practice by reflecting on my two main aims: (1) to develop NHH's reputation and (2) to develop relationships with the Chief Executive and between Board members.

I judge the value of my inquiry by (a) the inner resonance between my intention and action, and (b) by my stated intention that may be negotiated and revised, and (c) the practical outcome. I judge the worth of my claim to practise pedagogy of presence using the three criteria, which are:

- to reframe we are doing now; so that our joint work can become easier and more pleasurable.
- to inspire and support relational based strategies and inclusive decision-making within organisations
- to bring a resonance, a flavour of harmony linking the practical and invisible spaces in which we participate.

At the end of these two cycles, I conclude

- i) That the process of 'reframing' has been started by involving tenants in the recruitment and induction process for Board members, and by my further reconsideration of the format of the Customer Care strategy.
- ii) That my aim to create the conditions for organisational growth by supporting relational based strategies is evidenced by my actions at the Board meeting.
- iii) The opportunity to attend the Regional event might enable the CE and myself to create a shared landscape of possibility. This will contribute to creating a relation between us and defining the practical and invisible space that we share.

In this case example I have shown how the methodology of my first person inquiry is applied to my organisational practice. I focus my attention on the possibilities afforded by silence as I prepare for meetings. I read and make notes in relation to the agendas and reports; I encourage and make time for the multiple meanings of the reports to resonate with my embodied sense of what feels right and what feels dissonant. I absorb the meaning as well as analyse the meaning of what I read and allow silence to reorder my thoughts.

## EVALUATING 'A PEDAGOGY OF PRESENCE'

I use Bernstein's model of pedagogic communication to argue that love can be transmitted in pedagogic relations. I have clarified the difference between explicit, implicit and tacit pedagogy in my practice as a yoga teacher and as a leader.

In my practice as a Board member, and now as Chair of the Board, I will alter the nature of the pedagogic transmission by focussing my gaze in certain directions I hope I will tacitly transmit my recontextualising principles. I use explicit pedagogy in highlighting Board recruitment and the Customer Care strategy for full discussion. I use implicit pedagogy by watching and encouraging tenants views as a part of a process rather than as an item on the agenda or a report. I use tacit pedagogy through my embodied intention to open up relational spaces and improve communication.

Although the pedagogy of presence may involve all three forms of pedagogic communication, it is tacit pedagogy that links (o)ntology with (e)pistemology. The example above is a demonstration of the practical relevance of a pedagogy of presence, which seeks to legitimise certain aspects of organisational life.

My findings, that embodied knowledge is transmitted through the pedagogy of presence, is also demonstrated in the video on the CD-ROM and in the evidence provided in the feedback of my yoga students.

## EVALUATING THE NOUMENAL QUALITIES OF LOVE AT WORK

Patti Lather's (Lather, 1995) concept of **ironic validity** is based on the premise that validity can never be captured, only displaced by other meanings, and that we can only grasp at meanings through a series of narratives or representations that can never show the real meaning.

'Using simulacra to resist the hold of the real and to foreground radical unknowability, the invisible can be made intelligible via objects that are about nonobjecthood. Contrary to dominant validity practices where the rhetorical nature of scientific claims is masked with methodological assurances, a strategy

of ironic validity proliferates forms, recognising that they are rhetorical and without foundation, post-epistemic, lacking in epistemological support' (Lather 1995 p.677).

It is like this with my experience of divine love. I know that I can never show the real meaning, so I have attempted to show a flavour of it by describing what I see through the lens of love and hope that by doing this, something of love's essence can be shared. It gives a new dimension to the manner in which we inquire because it is through the manner of its many forms of lightness that the noumenon, the nature, of the values of humanity are enabled to shine through my representations.

This noumenal quality of love is the ineffable, almost grasped and never captured. This disappearing form is represented through subtlety of touch, a fleeting lightness, and is the sacred ground from which the pedagogy of presence arises.

It is the quality of my consciousness<sup>1</sup> that determines what I see, and which determines my imagined symbolic landscape. When I act in accord with a loving landscape the resonance of my action spreads into the shared social space that I am a part of. New and changing meanings are derived from the resonances of others. I have proliferated love's forms in an organisational context, not in order to fix meanings but to bring it into fuller consciousness, to increase the possibilities of love's modality being materialised in practical outcomes.

I maintain that in relational practice it is possible to judge the noumenal quality of love by its reflection in action. And I point to the conjunction of my ongoing interest in tenant involvement and my election as Chair at the point when four new Board members are about to be recruited, as an indication that the direction and modality of my loving inquiry has been validated over time. However social relations do not solely determine the quality of my consciousness or my understanding of the meaning of love at work.

The foundation of my consciousness is derived from the qualities of my being and developed through the ordering principles of silence in spiritual practice. I know that there is nothing new under the sun, that my claims in relation to both my

(o)ntology and the divine are 'rhetorical and without foundation, post-epistemic, lacking in epistemological support' (ibid. p. 677). I nevertheless argue that the combination of spiritual practice and action research has been well documented, the coherence of the direction of my intention with the direction of my practice (above), and my many hermeneutical and phenomenological descriptions of love, when knitted together, validate my claim to realise the ineffable qualities of love at work.

Lather goes on to suggest **neo-pragmatic validity** as another form of validity that 'let contradictions remain in tension' which welcomes 'openness and counter-interpretations' (Lather, 1995 p.679). Because love's socially constructed meanings are always disappearing and reappearing, I have used this sense of fluidity as a way of discovering the power relations inherent in hegemonic constructions of love.

My knowledge is constructed from messing about whilst holding the shape and focus of my purpose in mind. I feel this way, what does this mean; I think this, they think that, does this mean that I will change my mind? Mine is, and always was, a world of relative meanings in which I respond or invite response to get clarification, contradiction, balance, equanimity. It gets complicated, shifting this way and that way, falling into holes, climbing out again, keeping the balls in the air.

In bringing my (o)ntology and Rayner's concept of the Complex Self together, I show how the 'I' is also fluid, and I have extended Lather's concept of neo-pragmatic validity to include the knower as well as the known.

The changing nature of individual consciousness and the fluidity of new meanings defies both fundamentalism and hegemony. In this way neo-pragmatic validity becomes an important source for legitimising my inquiry and my spiritual values without any requirement to explain my position in relation to the dangerous realms of religion or religious belief systems.

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<sup>1</sup> See definitions of consciousness on pp. 62-63



In her concept of **rhizomatic validity** Lather says 'Rhizomes produce paradoxical objects', '[t]hey enable us to follow an anarchistic growth, not to survey the smooth unfolding of an orderly structure' (Lather, 1995 p.680) and her ideas were lying rhizomatically beneath my mind as I wrote Chapter Seven. It resonates with Bordieu's reading of how habitus is learned through mnemonic forms, and with my sense of the mandalic field and inclusivity. Embodied memories enable me to discover the phenomenological themes, to reconceptualise, to get at the deeper meanings behind the experience of love and organisation.

From experience I know that something worthwhile will arise provided I keep the focus of sensed memory in my mind. My direction changes as I respond to this idea or this person, as I feel 'called' or 'hailed' by events, and as the focus of my attention arouses feelings and changes my actions. Nothing is an accident, it might all be important. This responsiveness to events or people is how I develop knowledge that contributes to the fulfilment of purpose. Rhizomatic validity is a way of describing the direction of my inner and outer orientation, the checking and rechecking of the direction of the flow of thinking and being in the process of doing.

And I also offer this writing as a pale example of Lather's fourth concept of validity, that of **voluptuous or situated validity**, 'a disruptive excess' that is:

'[a] self conscious partiality, an embodied positionality and a tentativeness which leaves space for others to enter, for the joining of partial voices. Authority comes from engagement and reflexivity in a way that exceeds Lyotardian paralogy via practices of textual representation that, by hegemonic standards, "go too far" with the politics of uncertainty. The effect is achieved by blurring the lines between the genres of poetry and social science reporting' (Lather, 1995 p.683).

I could have gone even further in blurring the boundaries between poetry and reality, between the confessional and the academic. Perhaps one day I will.

I justify the use of Lather's concepts of situated validity because she highlights the potential afforded in the relation of risk to scholarship, because poetry discloses knowledge rather than analyses the already known, there is an unfolding of knowledge from a different perspective. She encourages a collapse

of the boundary between poetry and knowledge, and suggests new ways of validating value-laden knowledge that legitimises felt experience within the academy.

## THE TRUTH OF THE METHOD

The truth of my claim, that I can become an instrument of love's purpose through a pedagogy of presence as I act in a leadership role, can also be validated through the disciplined consistency with which I journal and make sense of my practice accounts.

In Chapter Three I show how my methodology sits within the action research paradigm, and in Chapter Four I show how I have adapted this to incorporate my spiritual discipline.

In making my claim to truth, I follow Heron's model of bi-polar congruence (Heron, 1996 p. 57). Here, Heron says:

'I take the view that validity itself, concern with the justification of truth-values, is interdependent with that which transcends it, the celebration of being-values, of what is intrinsically worthwhile in our experience' (Heron, 1996, p. 58).

Starting my inquiry with my embodied experience of love in Part Two, I develop hermeneutical accounts of practice in Part Three, which leads onto the development of propositional knowledge. I then substantiate my theory of pedagogy of presence in a further hermeneutical reading, where I show how spiritual experience can be brought into my leadership actions. This is a pattern of coherence and consistency which Heron refers to as 'bi-polar congruence as dialectical process', where, firstly, the 'grounding of truth values' moves from embodied and felt knowing, into action and practice, to the propositional (the formulation of living theory), and back into experiential knowing. And secondly, where 'consummation of being' moves from the experiential to the presentational to propositional to practical and back to experiential<sup>2</sup>. I show how I 'ground' my truth values in Chapters One, Five and Six; and 'consummate' my being values in

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<sup>2</sup> I have differences with Heron's model where he claims that knowing is valid only if it is free from distortion. I argue the case for immersion in values in Chapter Two.

Chapters Seven, Eight, Ten and here in the evaluation of my action account at the beginning of this chapter.

In seeking to verify my findings, I make no universal claim, either in the application of my method or the generalisability of my findings. The relevance of my claim lies in the characteristics of humanity that we all share.

### **EVALUATING THIS THESIS AGAINST MY STANDARDS**

- i) to reframe what we are doing now; so that our joint work can become easier and more pleasurable.**

This refers to the relation of the reader to what is written. If my thesis 'makes sense' or if it echoes the experience of the reader, or if it creates more questions and more inquiring with others, then this thesis will be influencing and reframing. I indicate the audience and the arenas in which this account may be relevant in the next Chapter.

I also provide a more personal 'felt' evaluation of this account using this standard in the Epilogue.

- ii) to inspire and support relational based strategies and inclusive decision-making within organisations**

I was focused on developing the loving skills of collaborative working throughout my inquiry. In this chapter, and in the CD-ROM referred to in Chapter One, and in Chapter Six, I have given examples of how I bring love into practice through the pedagogy of presence

I ask the reader to judge this thesis against this standard. In Part Three, chapters Seven, Eight and Ten, I show how the dynamical boundaries of love can operate in leadership activity and I make a case for allowing the emergence (rather than the imposition) of strategy and organisational structure through relationship.

- iii) **to bring a resonance, a flavour of harmony linking the practical and invisible spaces in which we participate.**

This standard refers to the poetic, noumenal qualities of love and the qualities of 'beingness'. This is the standard that I use when I reflect on my action accounts, and that I seek to bring into my action.

Again, it is up to the reader to judge how far these qualities resonate within him /herself. I have been concerned with my (o)ntology and not ontology-in-general, and so these words will not have a universal appeal. On the other hand I would expect that there will be some parts of the writing, or extracts, that will 'make sense' to most readers, because love, desire and relationship are universal human characteristics.

## PART FOUR: FINDINGS

### CHAPTER TWELVE

#### RELATIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE AUDIENCE

*In this chapter I argue the relevance of this thesis as I respond to and make connections with other first person inquiries, and academic perspectives on love and spirituality in organisational settings.*

Relational epistemology is knowledge that is derived through connection, response and resolution of difference<sup>1</sup>. My knowledge derives from learning through relationship, and holding the 'other' as part of the self. Engagement with the other permeates my method and my practice. Following Marshall (2005) I identified the multi-layered relational aspects of my inquiry process in Chapter Three, where I describe ten dimensions encompassing my inner (o)ntological relations and my verbal outer relations. Following Anderson (2000) 'I work in collaboration even when I am working alone' (ibid. p.11).

The purpose of my inquiry was to make connections between my spiritual practice and my professional practice. Although I knew that these were interrelated, I could not describe these connections to others. There was an absence of relatedness, a gap, between these two forms of practice.

Through meditation, yoga *asanas*, reading, writing and inquiring with others I now understand how this absence can be mediated by the presence of love. I can now see how love stretches the boundaries between some-thing and another thing, a thing that may be a person, an entity or an idea. I now understand that when love fills these relational gaps, knowledge is created.

Starting from an ontological perspective, I have described how my practice includes the rational, the emotional and the sensuous. Providing examples of reflective writing, accounts of practice, CD-ROM, feedback from students and

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<sup>1</sup> '(e)pistemology views knowing as something that is socially constructed by embedded, embodied people who are in relation with each other' Thayer-Bacon (2003, p.10)

peer review I have shown the relation of being to action, and how my interactions and relationships with others mediate this. I have immersed myself in my ontological perspective, which has resulted in a unique reading of how love works.

Thayer-Bacon (2003) says that, 'ontology and epistemology cannot be separated; they are connected and support each other. They are the warp and the woof that form the netting we use to catch up our experiences and describe them and give them meaning' (ibid. p. 256). My purpose was to honour the connection between my (o)ntology and my practice. In the process of learning about the nature of this relation I have developed my own living theory that describes the 'mode of belonging' of my 'being' and 'doing', a living theory that relies on love generating knowledge across the boundaries between the known and the not-yet-known. In Chapter Seven, writing erotically, I realised that the action of eros must be contained, and in Chapter Eight, that the dissolution of agape must also be contained, that both have boundaries across which the divine mediates.

As I watched myself in conversation with Paul in the video, I realised the importance of 'presence' as a tacit component of relationship. I could see that if I truly live my practice then I would be enabled to bring the experience of the divine into shared relational spaces, and that in this way it is possible to become an instrument of love's purpose.

My ontological inquiry starts with silent spiritual practice, the place where I get an embodied sense of the presence of the divine. In asking how I might become an instrument of love's purpose, I am seeking to know how to move in unison with that sense of the divine. In developing my (e)pistemology I make connections between silence, which is stillness, and the inner movements of emotion and thought as they resonate outwards and are manifested in speech and action. I judge my actions and my practice by the harmonic resonances felt in the spaces between the personal and the social.

I have made it clear that I learn through the skin, rather than through the brain, that my learning is an absorptive bodily process, rather than a brainy intellectual process. This does not mean that my (e)pistemology is thoughtless, but that the route that my thinking takes is not adequately represented in analytic categories.

It means that in seeking to show the relevance of this thesis to academia, I look for connections with other papers and articles that put relational epistemology at the heart of their account. To be relevant means that there must a relation that arouses harmonic echoes in me.

As I write I try to imagine my audience, and create a sense of what it might feel like to perform my text. The movement feels incongruous as I reach outwards to the unknown, imagining how my contribution might support, or add depth, or give a different perspective to that which is already known.

## THE ACTION RESEARCH AUDIENCE

My inquiry is an example of how first person inquiry can be saturated in subjectivity, make a contribution to knowledge and at the same time have social and practical relevance.

Donna Ladkin says in a recent article, 'One of the difficulties I notice students can have...is in determining how to place themselves in relation to their inquiries in a way that takes into account the fullness of their subjective experience without being "self indulgent"' (Ladkin, 2005 p. 109). Ladkin (following Bortroft) suggests that one of the ways to avoid solipsism and create a more balanced perspective is to encounter the 'other' in direct experience, giving primacy to experiencing the other in a non-verbal sensuous merging<sup>2</sup>. In this thesis I have shown how solipsism can be avoided by extending this sensuous merging into social action, which in turn creates inner dissonance and / or harmony which then alters inner meanings, which results in different action... and so on.

In seeking to evaluate the truth of my findings, I have shown how it is possible to apply the criteria of love at work to evaluate my ontological, subjective experience; and my propositional knowledge; and my professional practice. The capacity of these standards of judgement to be applied across the experiential, the propositional and the practical support the 'truth' of my findings.

This inquiry explores the intrinsic relation between embodied knowledge and the mind. Whilst there are many references to embodied knowledge in the action research literature, there are few explications of what this means and I have not come across any other action research account that deals with this in the same detail.

By describing the practice of learning and teaching yoga I show how tacit knowledge can be passed to others through touch, language and demonstration. By reflecting on this embodied pedagogic transmission, the presence of absence - the gap between knowing and not-yet-knowing - was disclosed.

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<sup>2</sup> This fullness of experience and its capacity to colour reasoning is akin to Ruddick's (1989) Maternal Thinking



Yogic practices teach techniques of body and mind control. Learning to control the body, instructions are given on how to 'do' the *asana* correctly. However, the aim of the practise is to let the *asana* 'do' itself. The learning is not about copying the visual model, but learning by inference what the *asana* requires through the direction of the movement. Paradoxically 'controlling' in this context means working directly with what is experienced, not seeking for some-thing. It is an organic, developing awareness, which finds wholeness in direct experience.

In the same way that the yoga *asanas* can be practised to achieve the required shape of the *asana*, action research methods can be adapted to improve action research practice. The action researcher has choices about how to use the models of action research. One choice would be to decide beforehand which action research model should be used achieve the outcome, and to demonstrate understanding by justifying the choice of method (Reason, 2003). Another choice would be to see how action research models are adapted as the inquiry emerges. It is the latter option that I have chosen. I have let the models of first person inquiry show me how these methods can improve my practice.

The importance of action research is that it offers the researcher these flexible and adaptable ways of learning that stretch from the experiential to the practical<sup>3</sup>. Because this thesis is situated at the experiential and visioning ends of the action research spectrum, it provides a detailed analysis of how 'upstream' first person inquiry comes 'downstream' using Heron's model of Bi-Polar Congruence in the extended epistemology of Reason (Reason and Bradbury 2001). And I am also able to show how Torbert's 'moment-to-moment'<sup>4</sup> experience (in the Four Territories of Experience) influences the quality of my practice. I have come across few accounts that address these issues in depth.

My methodology relies on surfacing a range of different meanings arising from the 'ordering principles' of language and silence. These ordering principles pattern, organise, select and focus my meaning, they underlay my choice of words and the grammar of my language and also lie within silence. The language developed through inquiring alters my practice, which alters my language. Taking a similar form, the qualities of silence bring me into closer

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<sup>3</sup> See Reason and Bradbury (2001) and Torbert's Four Territories of Experience from visioning to assessing in Fisher, Rooke and Torbert (2000).

<sup>4</sup> Torbert, 2001 p. 251 and Marshall, 2005 p. 307.

relation with the ineffable. Silence then changes my 'being' and the mode of my seeing, which in turn alters my 'being'.

I evaluate the worth of my practice by the modality of the 'opening' to the not-yet-known. This modality may, or may not, be loving. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way, no convention, but there is discipline of noticing the modality, the quality of awareness, the discipline of continuing to look when I do not want to 'see' that which appears.

I had already used co-operative inquiry as a methodology for my Master's degree (Lohr 1993) and I took the research method as a 'given' in the way that I stretch into an already practised *asana*. This does not mean that I have nothing to learn about action research models, but that learning by applying a model became more important than choosing the 'correct' model. So for this inquiry, I chose to develop a mode of inquiring, rather than a model of inquiry, and let the modality of love determine the method and direction of my inquiry. My inquiry is about<sup>5</sup> a mode of consciousness through which I learn how my practice might be improved. So far as I am aware, there is no other published action research account that sets out to address issues of value and consciousness in quite the same way.

In the participative world of action researchers, the mode of consciousness will affect both the quality of our collaboration and the quality of our shared knowledge.

### **Action Research and Spiritual Practice (Reason, 2000)**

Peter Reason's paper on Action Research and Spiritual Practice (Reason, 2000) suggests that the generation of practical knowledge through action research is a multidimensional process that brings different forms of knowing into new relation with each other. He suggests that because action research brings about a dissolution of the traditional conceptual splits of the western world, it becomes a form of everyday spirituality. Referring to Thomas Aquinas, Reason says that

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<sup>5</sup> This statement depends on seeing the self as the Complex Self of inclusionality. Being able to choose modality implies that the practitioner can discriminate between the fluctuations of consciousness and choosing the mode of consciousness.

'spirituality is about all our relations ... the capacity to relate to all things' (ibid. p. 3). Reason demonstrates what he means by making connections between the Four Paths of Matthew Fox's Creation Spirituality (Fox, 1994) and the social changes achieved through various action research projects. The paper is a celebration of the action research process, and makes the practice of action research comparable to spiritual practice because it is concerned with worthwhile purposes and human flourishing. Reason shows how action research can be viewed as a spiritual practice by giving examples of how the intrinsic values of action researchers can be viewed through the lens of the Via Positiva, Negativa, Creativa and Transformativa.

My thesis is concerned with the same territory as Reason's. He recognises the wider religious and social derivation of Fox's spiritual values and brings them onto the action research landscape. I am moving outwards, applying ontologically developed values by deliberately writing (as Reason also does) through a particular value-laden lens. In so doing, I show how my values influence my practice using first person research methodologies. What this thesis brings to the conversation about action research as spiritual practice, is the influence that everyday spiritual practice has on developing a particular learning style and the direct effect that spiritual values have on action research practice.

### **Buddhism and Action Research: Toward an Appropriate Model of Inquiry for the Caring Profession (Winter, 2003)**

In relation to models of inquiry for the caring professions, Richard Winter (Winter, 2003) traces the parallels between action research and Buddhist doctrine. He shows how the qualities of awareness described in Buddhist texts can improve and support action research method and practice. He asks, 'how can we inquire in such a way that it actually, directly, immediately *enhances* nursing practice?' (ibid. p. 1 [*author's italics*]). He answers this by giving examples of how western conceptual thinking and constructions of the self are extended by Buddhist theory to incorporate a reflexive analysis of changing phenomena, analogous to and illuminating action research principles. He argues that Buddhism 're-defines the scope of social practices and offers practical guidance for redefining the processes and relationships of inquiry' (ibid. p. 9). This is an approach, which epitomises the western analytical model. Winter, is taking one theory and making

connections with another theory. The connections are well made, they make sense, but they remain reasoned connections and not lived connections. A lived, heuristic connection approach would pay more attention to the possibilities that an enhanced caring brings to action, would see care in action and watch 'caring' being enhanced through developing awareness demonstrated in action. This is what Buddhist theory is about, being the doing, not thinking about new ways of doing.

Winter's article is written in traditional academic mode. His focus is on the nursing profession. He says in a note at the end of the article that there would be a different emphasis if he was making links between Buddhism and action research in educational settings. This shows how his traditional analysis focuses on the particular rather than on a holistic opening up of the potential of the idea. From my inclusional perspective, I would look for a fuller lived experiential enaction of the potential meanings that Winter has generated in the relational space between Buddhism and action research.

### **Sacred Science: Person-centred Inquiry into the Spiritual and the Subtle (Heron 1998)**

In his book 'Sacred Science' Heron (Heron, 1998) writes about his lived experience of spiritual inquiry and co-operative inquiry. He makes a case for subtle experience arising from sustained individual inquiry to be validated and sustained through collaboration with others in second person inquiry.

His book is concerned with avoiding the gender bias and the abuse of power and imperialism of established religions, including Christianity, Buddhism and eastern philosophies. His answer to these problems is to propose that self-managed techniques be devised jointly in co-operative inquiry. In this way he suggests that individual spiritual authority can be developed without a reliance on a powerful teacher who may not be trustworthy.

Heron takes great care to explain the dangers of reliance on spiritual authority figures. The foundation of the book is based on his distrust of religion and religious leaders. His alternative relies on the development of co-operative inquiry techniques; 'knacks' for entering altered states of consciousness through which

he maps his own theory of di-polar consciousness. He validates his findings in accounts of second person co-operative inquiries, and maintains, 'Their limited claim to validity does not warrant any wholesale prescription to others. ... They are promising approaches to transformations of being and practice, which others will reconstrue and apply in their own way' (ibid. p. 19).

Heron blurs the distinctions between propositional knowledge and religious doctrine, suggesting that individuals cannot make these distinctions for themselves, and he rejects spiritual practice based in particular religious beliefs. He addresses what he sees as the inadequacies of religion by developing new spiritual techniques to replace time honoured religious practices.

In this thesis I have provided an alternative relation between spiritual practice and propositional knowledge. By discriminating between knowledge developed through spiritual practice and knowledge that is derived from professional practice, and then by considering the gap between this spiritual and the professional knowing, I have developed a living educational theory that connects being with doing. In this way I have shown how living spiritual values can be validated and judged through practice, and that co-operative inquiry is not the only way to validate individual subtle experience.

I don't think that the problems caused by religious fundamentalism can be addressed by complaining that religions persecute and are not politically correct. My alternative view is that action research, combined with religious practice, increases discriminative awareness and provides the energy and commitment towards developing worthwhile social action. I have shown how, by seeking to see the 'truth in the action' and to 'consummate being values' as Heron also suggests, spiritual practice can be validated.

I address the issue of self-identity and submission to the other in several places in this thesis. I would suggest that psychological strength is just as important for those deciding to undertake co-operative inquiry, as it is for those that decide to trust spiritual teachers. If a person is psychologically weak, there is danger and a responsibility in any learning or collaborative relationship, and the more a person invests in learning from others, the more trust needs to be present.

If I critique these questions of power through the lens of Bernstein's theories, I consider the thickness of the insulation of the boundaries between individuals and the effect of love in that relation. I think that our experience of the subtle inevitably influences what we do together. In other words, what is important in action research is to understand how the influence of the subtle relates to the material being of practice. Or to put it another way, action researchers do not need to reinvent the spiritual wheel by discovering new techniques. Instead we need to focus on testing the individual experiences of the subtle, by reflecting on whether this awareness is manifested as we work together and seek worthy practical outcomes in the social world.

My critique of Heron arises from following the direction of the dissonance that I feel as I read this book (Heron, 1998) and is followed by an analysis of his propositions. I look for the cause, for what might be the seat of my distaste. I judge whether I have articulated my disagreement by whether or not I get a sense of satisfaction from reading what I have written.

I think that this is the way many people make judgements:

'in asking questions about the meaning and purpose of your lives you are aware of the flows of energy in making judgements of value in what you do, about what you have done, and about what you intend to do' (Whitehead, 2005).

*'Pursuing outer arcs of attention* involves reaching outside of myself in some way. (The inner attentions are operating simultaneously). This means actively questioning, raising issues with others, or seeking ways of developing my ideas. Or it might mean finding ways to turn issues, dilemmas or potential worries into cycles of (explicit – to me) inquiry in action, perhaps seeking to change something and learning about situation, self, issues and others in the process' (Marshall, 2001, p. 434).

What I have done in this thesis is develop my perspective on how these flows of energy help to improve my professional practice, and this has led me to develop standards against which the social value of those energy flows can be judged.

**The Practice of Action Inquiry (Torbert, 2001)**

Here, Bill Torbert is concerned to bring 'intentional self-observation' (Torbert, 2001, p. 251) into all aspects of daily life categorised within the Four Territories of Experience. He suggests a form of first person research practice that incorporates accounts of bodily experience with accounts of action to illustrate his point that noticing the moment-to-moment experience will enhance the effectiveness of action (ibid. p. 250). In Chapter Seven, I critique Torbert's model of leadership development and his example of *coitus interruptus* as a second person research practice by discriminating between cognitive models of adult development and Hindu religious theory. Here, however, I make a connection with his explicit intention to bring embodied awareness into social action. The contrast between our accounts is in the route that he takes. Torbert begins with desire to improve action by developing greater levels of awareness, whereas I start with a first order desire to bring love into action and then to assess the worth of that action against my standards of judgement.

## THE WIDER ACADEMIC AUDIENCE

In the following paragraphs I demonstrate how my thesis relates to academic writing on love, in relation to four publications: Cho (Cho, 2005), Griffin (Griffin, 2002), Fraser (Fraser, 2003) and Biberman and Whitty's reader on Work and Spirit (Biberman and Whitty, 2000).

### **Lessons of love: Psychoanalysis and the Teacher-Student Relationship (Cho, 2005)**

Cho's (2005) paper on the teacher – student relationship addresses the issue of love in a pedagogical relationship through a Lacanian psychoanalytic frame. He concludes that:

'In the love encounter, the teacher and student do not seek knowledge from or of each other, but rather they seek knowledge from the world *with* each other. ... the incomplete status of knowledge is no longer a condition of its content but of its very frame, love means the pursuit of real knowledge. ... with love education becomes an open space for thought from which emerges knowledge' (Cho, 2005 p. 94).

Cho says, 'love is the pursuit of real knowledge' (Cho, 2005 p. 94). I share this understanding of what love is, and I think I understand how love creates the conditions in which worthwhile knowledge can be developed. I want to support Cho's interpretation, by showing how love can be brought into relationship through pedagogy of presence. I find educational similarities between the teach-student relation and the leader-staff member relation.

By developing my living theory, I have demonstrated how non-verbal embodied knowledge influences my work as a leader on the Housing Association Board. My experience is that every leader experiences a sense of reaching into the not-yet-known, of working with others to concretise organisational visions and expectations. I have demonstrated how tacitly held knowledge seeds creative joint endeavours, and how love can seed practical organisational knowledge as well as educational knowledge.



I find connections between Cho's Lacanian analysis and my felt experience of the resonance's of love in the inclusional space of relationship, where the educational relationship and the leader's organisational relations are both concerned with bringing the transformational energy of love into the dynamic of change.

### **The Emergence of Leadership: Linking Self Organisation and Ethics (Griffin, 2002)**

Griffin (2002) and Shaw (2002) writing about relationship in organisations assume that 'There is a dominantly held belief that in our everyday exchanges with others we are autonomous individuals ... capable of making rational decisions...that we first reflect and then we act (Griffin, 2002 p. 176). Griffin and Shaw maintain that as a consequence of a Kantian split between the individual and the collective this reflection before action leads to an avoidance of the paradoxes that naturally occur in practice, and a promulgation of existing and unacknowledged power relations. They suggest that we should change the way we think about conversation and relationship in organisation to 'functionalising intentions' (Ibid. p.194) so that the future can be constructed in the moment, rather than planned beforehand.

I have already considered Complexity Theory in relation to my reading of love in organisation and concluded that these theories are over reliant on, and over emphasise, the cognitive component of relational practice to the detriment of the emotional and affective base of behaviour.

Immersing myself in the relation of feeling to thinking to speech<sup>6</sup>, and reflecting on their relevance, has enabled me to argue that the pedagogy of presence is an intrinsic part of the process of constructing the future in the present moment. This is a form of reflection that develops consciousness, and hopes to develop joint strategies but is not focused on strategy.

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<sup>6</sup> In Case Example Four, I illustrate what I mean.

I have shown in Case Examples that we / I may not always notice them but the tacit feelings lying behind speech are just as important in creative collaboration as the language that is used. And the explicit or implicit acknowledgement of that tacit component is an integral aspect of showing respect and valuing the other, which in turn creates a truly collaborative space.

### **Narrating Love and Abuse in Intimate Relationships (Fraser, 2003)**

In her paper Fraser (Fraser 2003) examines the interface between love and abuse in a social work context. She considers that social work theory has not critically engaged with love, and goes on to suggest that this may lead social workers to apply habitual and unexamined values in their practice. Referring to mainstream psychology, she highlights the ungendered bias of most psychological theory, which ignores the gendered power relations of love and abuse within families, and dichotomises the way that victims and perpetrators are classified and treated. She concludes that it is important for social workers to deconstruct new discourses on love and abuse, and to contribute to opening up this debate by 'shift(ing) their gaze back and forth between the micro-politics of love relationships and the structural politics that constrain them' (ibid. 286).

I argue that this thesis contributes to our knowledge of love by showing how it is possible to clarify the meanings of love by an immersion in the paradoxical relation between emotion and practice in the inner arc of attention, which is mirrored in the outer arc of attention in relational practice in organisation. Whilst Fraser is concerned with popular narratives of love in the media and fiction, I have shown how understandings of love can arise as a consequence of individual first person inquiry. I make a case for the 'study of love' to become more experiential, more embodied, which when given permission to be understood in this way can, in combination with conceptual analysis, open up more interpretation and greater possibilities for human flourishing. Integrated into practice in this way, love will not only be transmitted more easily across the client / social worker relation, but will also provide more opportunities for the creation of new discourses that move away from an over-reliance on a generalised and reasoned analysis. And in this more inclusional debate, the transmission of knowledge will inevitably create new and deeper understandings of the meaning of love.

Fraser is writing about an area of social work that is fraught with moral and ethical dilemmas, many of which are faced by workers on the ground on a daily basis. I maintain that studying love will not guide action-in-the-moment as effectively as an embodied knowing of love. In this thesis I have shown how the spiritual qualities of being can be brought into practice in a way that enables a person to be guided by his/her living knowledge of love within conventional organisational and legal frameworks. I am suggesting here that in Fraser's call for case study material to develop a new social work discourse on love and abuse, the ontological creative qualities of love experienced by social workers must be included.

**Work and Spirit: A Reader of New Spiritual Paradigms for Organizations  
(Biberman and Whitty, 2000)**

This Reader is a collection of articles previously published in the Journal of Organisational Management, where the contributors cover a wide spectrum of perspectives. The articles include theoretical perspectives, individual accounts of a search for meaning within organisation, and organisational and societal applications of particular spiritual perspectives. In Boje's preface, which gives an alternative view to those of the editors (Boje, 2000) he draws out six paradigms of work and spirit that are addressed in the book, from which emanate 15 approaches to the study of spirit. He categorises 'love' as an affirmative post-modern approach.

I have written about my experience of divine love and taken this as analogous to writing about spirit, deliberately not defining what I mean by spirit or spirituality. Instead I have written about spiritual practice, my (o)ntological experience of love and where that leads me. I take a relational view of practice and have developed a relational (e)pistemology. But as a senior manager, and as a Board member, I cannot ignore the structural nature of organisational power, and the opportunities and responsibilities that are inherent within hierarchy, and without this experience I would not have inquired in the way that I have, into the relation of love and leadership. It was my discomfort with the paradoxical relation of relational practice and the achievement of organisational outcomes that initiated my inquiry in the first place.

Many of the articles in Biberman and Whitty's book are written by consultants and leaders who theorise about the applications of spiritual practices and the development of spiritual values undertaken in order to deepen an understanding of the core values within organisations<sup>7</sup>.

Whilst I recognise my part in the reproduction of existing power relations, this thesis also provides a logic for a radically different relational approach to spirituality at work. I advocate organisational structures based on relationship rather than on structural hierarchy, values and strategies. This idea may not be practical if it is applied to existing transnational corporations and large companies, but our post-capitalist society has also created a greater potential for smaller, more local organic organising structures to emerge and thrive. The opportunity for relational organisations rather than hierarchical organisations is increasing.

This thesis supports the logic of organic organisational growth that is able to recognise and harness loving energy that is generated when we work well together. It is a loose model of organisation that is both traditional and sustainable. It might be compared to that of the early Buddhist *sangha* (roughly translated as 'meetings'), 'He (the Buddha) did not think of himself as leading the *sangha*. ... He saw consensus as of the utmost importance to the life of the *sangha*. The Buddha also stressed the need for each local *sangha* to remain united. He allowed for individual difference, but he did not wish them to undermine the structural unity of a *sangha* and vitiate experience of everyday life. Controversy, whenever it arose, could be settled by the method of the dissenting individuals removing themselves and forming a new group. This distinguished the *sangha* from democracy, in which majority opinion is binding on everyone, and minority opinions are subordinated to the efficient functioning of the polity. ...the Buddha's emphasis on practice rather than theory kept his teachings relatively free of the taint of dogma and fundamentalism' (Mishra, 2005 pp. 284-285).

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<sup>7</sup> See Hogan, L.S. (2000) 'A Frame work for the Practical Application of Spirituality at work' in Biberman, J and Whitty, M.D (Eds.) *Work and Spirit A Reader of New Spiritual Paradigms for Organizations*. U.S.A: The University of Scranton Press pp.55-76.

## THE AUDIENCE BEYOND ACADEMIA

In this thesis I show how it is possible to develop knowledge and improve practice by following the resonances of love. My approach is holistic and disclosing rather than analytic and contained. I deliberately collapsed the traditional boundaries between feeling and cognition. To some readers the messiness and lack of linearity may be distressing, and I regret that. There are two things that I would say in response: firstly, what might first appear as an emotional over indulgence of passion is underpinned by consistent and committed everyday spiritual practice that I have adhered to for over 20 years under the guidance of an enlightened teacher. Secondly, the consequence of this practice means that my embodied knowledge has become less solipsistic and more altruistic, which means that I am more able to make a positive contribution to the audience beyond the academy and to the organisations in which I work.

From the outset, I make distinctions between universalising my experience (which I do not seek) and contributing to a general understanding of what it is to be human. Hindu philosophy maintains that the 'I' is the centre of consciousness and will, that our humanity means that we are conscious and intentional. I would maintain that this is a universal characteristic. However, in this inquiry I have distinguished between categories of mind, body and emotion, and suggested that these categories are culturally constructed. This means that the way that I live my (o)ntological inquiry, and therefore its (e)pistemological applicability, is culturally specific. It may also be gender specific, although I hope not.

I suggested at the beginning of my inquiry that there is a universal human characteristic that seeks unity, but that this is expressed differently across cultures. Taking this into account, I consider that my learning process does have general relevance beyond academia for those who seek to align their (o)ntological experience more closely with their social and professional practice.

## EPILOGUE

### THE EXAMINERS CHALLENGES

**I reflect on the examiner's interest in the links between the Eight Limbs of Yoga and action research.**

I decided to write a separate chapter on embodied knowledge, inquiring more deeply into the connection between mind and body, and how I convey my experience to others in a yoga class. Bearing in mind the examiners' request for more evidence of practice, I included feedback from 14 students attending two of my classes.

From this I learned more about the direction of embodied resonances, about how I teach and learn and make choices. It added to my understanding and provided coherent links between my embodied experience and language.

This same examiner also asked me to say more about the connections I had made between Spinoza and my experience. There was no time in the viva for further exploration of either his question, or my thinking. But I knew that I did not have an answer that would have satisfied me, and that I needed to address that question in the rewrite.

This is one of the reasons that I wrote Chapter Two, to situate Spinoza in relation to Kant and the philosophers of the Enlightenment. In doing this, I satisfied myself that I could defend my references to Spinoza because he was a western philosopher who did not avoid the relation between feeling and thinking, and who advocated the deliberate cultivation of joyful thinking.

**Reflecting further on the viva, I asked myself, 'What meaning does the examiner's attempts not to be rude have for me, what direction does this send me in?'**

I hunted around for an answer. I asked a few people what they thought and reread some of this examiner's writing. I decided that he thought the writing was undisciplined and inelegant, and that the most important challenge for me was to

write and structure the writing 'elegantly'. I decided 'elegance' meant being clear and being stylish and neither messy nor passionate.

I therefore needed to take pay attention to the grammar: firstly, my sentences needed to be turned round, so that they were constructed by putting the conclusion first rather than the explanation. Secondly, the sentences needed to include as little affect as possible. Thirdly, I needed to make my message simpler. Fourthly, the thesis needed a very clear structure, adhered to without exception.

### **Losing stamina**

As I began to write the concluding chapters, I began to struggle. The joy of responding to my examiners' challenges was waning. It had been a long and tiresome process. I was alone, writing alone and my spirits were low. Drawing on my reserves I determined to comply with the structure and the limits I had set myself.

This is an excerpt from my journal at that time:

In a conversation with Madeline about why I am asking readers to mark my text in red pen wherever they recoil from my writing, she suggests that my inquiry now is 'How can I make meanings and myself understood to the male brain.'

I hear her exasperation, her fear that I may be losing my scholarship. She asks me if Jack is reading it. I tell her that I am rewriting this thesis on my own, that I only seem able to do it on my own. That I am going deep into my psyche in a passionless almost masturbatory process which I find boring and makes me angry. My potential for depression is clear.

In responding enthusiastically to the examiners' request, I had willingly submitted myself to the will of 'others'. I found that the only way that I could sustain my response was to become solitary, not discussing the content with others. I asked people for specific feedback on grammar and form, but I could not inquire with others and stay true to my intention to comply wholeheartedly with what the

examiners wanted. I found myself in a tug-of-war between conventional rationality and my relational (e)pistemology, and it was very painful.

I began to appreciate the full meaning of my relational (e)pistemology and in doing so, found further confirmation that I develop knowledge in response to the 'other'. Without relation I am in danger of becoming solipsistic, in danger of being trapped in a bell jar of self-alienation. The writing becomes pointless when it is not developed in response, so there is no practical outcome. I had already discovered my scholarship and found how I might bring this knowledge into my practice. This was a purely academic exercise.

I support myself through this depressive victim state, sitting in silence, meditating, remembering that not being able to discern purpose does not mean there is no purpose. I just have to do it. Like the Path of Duty, just doing it because I have been asked to do it, doing it to the best of my ability. I have relied upon developing this disciplined response in many different circumstances. I want to be able to look back on this rewrite and take pride in my flexibility and capacity to alter what I do, and that includes being able to alter the way that I write, to alter the 'ordering principles' of my language.

## **EXPERIENCE, THEORY AND PRACTICE**

My examiners asked me to distinguish between experience, theory and practice. I couldn't understand what caused them to ask such a question. So I asked myself, 'What do I mean when I say 'My experience'?'

My experience is what I think and feel in the act of either doing or remembering something. It is what I bring into the present when I act, which then informs the next time I act or think similarly. Experience is what I have learned, which I bring into action.

So what is action? It is practice - the practical act of doing. I think about what Jack Whitehead's definition of practice – it is acting – doing anything. Peter Reason seems to use the word to mean practice-in-the-world, professional practice, as in CARPP – Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice. I ask Sara (Glennie) what she means by practice, and she replies, 'My inquiry



practice'. That was interesting, because I call my practice of inquiry, my methodology. I realised that I needed to decide on a meaning of 'practice' and that this would refer to my practice teaching yoga and my leadership practice. That any other 'practices' would have a descriptor (such as spiritual practice). This might help to make my meaning clearer to my readers! In this way, experiential knowing becomes practical knowing.

What does the word 'theory' mean to me? It is the words that describe meanings more fully in contrast to, or in conjunction with, others words in the same field, as in 'mathematical theory' or philosophy. Or it is words that describe how something is constructed or how to implement something, as in 'How to grow vegetables' or 'Diversity and Equality Strategy'. It is the use of language to research new meaning, as in Foucauldian theory, or it is using language to inform. So when I say that I have developed my living theory, my theory is a description of my experience of how I improve my practice. In this way practical knowing becomes propositional knowing, becomes theory.

Because my learning is derived relationally, my knowledge is relational. That is why my experience of love is described in relation to what I do and what I read. It is why I bring my 'experience of love' into my writing about my teaching and leadership activities. It is why I need to be reminded of love's resonance when I reread my living educational theory of love and evaluate its usefulness. I seek a wholeness, unifying resonance, which is disclosed in the parts, and which come together like the petals of the lotus flower.

If my examiners see theory as ideas and models written about in books, then I must clarify the relation of my initial thinking to the cultural frame in which it sits and show how this influences me. I have to show how my reading alters my experience, which alters my writing. And how my experience of this is then theorised.

### **Evaluating the thesis from the standpoint of the examiners**

In the prologue, I summarise the examiners report in the following way:

The examiners say:

1. how this is work inquiry, and in particular how is it action research?
2. the absence of a strong methodological discussion
3. the flow of argument was often unclear
4. the primary chapter ...was disjointed and disconnected from theoretical themes
5. the patterns of the thesis must be made clear to the reader.
6. the process of inquiry must be made explicit, such that cycles of action and reflection are articulated and that strong links be made between experience, practice, and theory.
7. the evidence provided supports the conclusions reached.

Point (1) is explicitly covered at the beginning of Chapter Three.

Point (2) is covered in Chapters Three and Four

In relation to point (3) I have introduced summaries in most of the chapters where I think that is necessary in order to clarify my meanings.

The exception to this is Chapter Five, referred to as the 'primary chapter'. This is reflective writing. I have now explained this more fully in Chapter Two, and also provided a full justification for this approach in my methodology chapters. I have also 'signposted' the sections throughout this chapter to indicate the direction of the reflective flow.

On point (5) I have completely restructured the thesis, introducing the propositional frame at the beginning and providing two concluding and evaluating chapters. I have explained my approach in the Prologue and outlined the structure in the Introduction.

On point (6) I have represented my inquiry practice to show the cycles of action and reflection as requested.

And on point (7) I have responded to my examiners by providing a current example of my leadership practice, which shows how I apply my methodology and allow love to influence my actions more fully.

**Revisiting the conversation in the viva: Making the connection between experience and practice.**

The re-presentation of my thesis is based on the examiners' report. The penultimate sentence of this report reads:

'That the candidate ensure that the evidence provided supports the conclusions reached'

These innocuous few words belie the emphasis placed on this in the viva. On the tape of the conversation I hear, over and over again, repeatedly, the examiner ask the same question, 'You use concepts as labels and stay on labels...big ideas standing for something...linking would be magical...I can't link to anything...how are you evidencing...reflective evidence does not constitute a body of evidence...'. I hear myself on the tape giving a robust defence, explaining, making connections, and giving many examples that linked the experiential accounts with the accounts of practice. The conversation goes on for hours, much of it travelling around this same route. I kept remembering that the examiners had said beforehand, repeated at the commencement of the Viva 'We are open to persuasion', and by the end of the session, I was thinking 'I can see no evidence that they are open to persuasion.'

This is why we had, what is referred to in the examiners' report as 'an extended discussion' about the revision. I was asking them to be precise about their requirements, not because I did not understand what 'major rewrite' means, but because I wanted some reassurance, that they would stand by what they said. In the viva I experienced a dissonance between the examiner's verbalised

statements and their judgements, and I wanted a sufficient clarification in order to attune myself to their understanding.

## CRITICAL SUBJECTIVITY

The viva conversation started with a set of questions about critical subjectivity. Questions like, 'How do I judge your account as a remote reader?' Referring to Jack's email (included in the original submission) the question was, 'What would you say to me as an impersonal third?' and 'Dissolving of self...I can't link to anything'. Finally a general statement was made in relation to first person inquiry, 'we are looking at ourselves, treating ourselves as objects in some way...the dynamic of first person inquiry does this.'

I see these questions as emanating from the great debates in western philosophy about the nature of 'essence' and 'universality' and 'truth'. I think there is an underlying assumption that the truth can only be established if we can see ourselves as separated from the whole and pretend to be outside ourselves. That we can only make the connection between some-thing and another thing if we are not a part of it. That for truth to be established we must be clear thinking, which implies that there is no feeling getting in the way of thought. I spent the first 40 years of my life seeing myself as others see me, and I have spent the passed 20 years practising leaving this perspective behind. I will not judge my first person inquiry against these epistemological standards.

Heron (Heron, 2001) points out that critical subjectivity is a way of 'developing (*their*) attention so (*they*) can look at themselves – (*their*) way of being, (*their*) intuitions and imaginings, (*their*) beliefs and actions critically' (ibid. p. 184). I don't disagree with this definition.

However the standpoint from which my critical subjectivity takes place is not from outside, but from within. My critical standpoint is developed in spiritual practice, in the timeless being of silence. The worth of that critique is judged in its enaction and by the effectiveness of my leadership activity. Post-modern philosophy demonstrates that truth is relative, so the truth is unlikely to be found by standing outside oneself. Neither will it be found by becoming divorced from feeling. What is important in my first person practice is to judge the worth of my

practice when talking to, and working with, others. It is the continuing discrimination between the relation of my feeling, thinking and acting which enables me to improve my practice. What my inquiry has demonstrated is how I make the links between spiritual practice, first person practice and professional practice, and how I go on to develop my living educational theory by reflecting on this practice.

In Chapter Five I distinguish between the psychological and the spiritual. I show how feeling can overcome thought, and I distinguish this from the development of embodied spiritual values. In Chapter Four I show how I discriminate between strong feeling, thinking and acting through disciplined attention, journalling and meditation, and how this discrimination enables me to develop my methodology.

In this way I do not attempt a split or a separation of mind or body, or a 'bracketing off' of affect and thought, but I do discriminate between the movement of these inward qualities in order to improve my contribution in the world. The critical aspect of this is that in my inclusional world, my subjective meaning of 'good' work and 'loving' practice is constantly being clarified by the changing nature of the culture in which I live and work. The social definitions of what 'good' work and 'loving' practice are always changing. There is nothing 'transcendent' or universal about these meanings.

## **EVALUATING MY LEARNING FROM REWRITING THIS THESIS**

As I made it clear in the Prologue, this rewrite is not a labour of love. Instead it has primarily been an exercise in meeting the first of my standards, which is

**To recontextualise (reframe) what I am or we are doing now; so that our joint work can become easier and more pleasurable.**

I set out to make myself better understood to my examiners. To do this I needed to create a definite frame for my thesis and ensure consistency of language and method throughout my explanation.

In the first submission I wrote with love, and was careless about order, expression and language. I had lots of questions, not just about the relatedness

of eastern and western philosophy, feminism with Hinduism, competition and collaboration, but also about what went wrong in the organisation (WHHA) that I had worked for, and which merged with another Housing Association a year after I had left. As I wrote I developed my propositional knowledge. The writing itself was a practice that was improving, and could be shown to have improved by the end of the thesis.

Consequently, I left out many accounts of practice and tidied the whole thing up. I left in the confessional accounts in Chapter Five, to make a case for 'disruptive excess' and 'voluptuous validity' (Lather, 1993), as well as to 'ground my truth values' (Heron 1996).

In this second submission I have rewritten and recontextualised my scholarship because I would like my scholarship recognised. The measure of my success will be the pleasure (or not) that I feel (or we may jointly feel) when I ~~am~~ meet my examiners again to defend this account.

By doing a complete rewrite, I have learned more about how I use language, about the intersection of spiritual practice and action research, and have found further confirmation of my scholarship by expressing my 'truth' differently.

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